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Mimesis as communication in the work of art.

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MIMESIS AS COMMUNICATION

IN THE WORK OF ART

BY

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Abstract

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine, referring predominantly to Aristotle's Poetics, his general theory of art, that all art is imitation, and to attempt to elucidate, using tragedy as paradigmatic of an authentic form of a work of art, the ramifications of this statement.

Chapter One concerns Plato's criticism of the art of rhetoric recounted in the dialogue, Gorgias, and affirms the irrelevance of censure attributing to a work of art such effects as might be produced by it upon institutions, customs and bodies of knowledge, maintaining that the only applicable reprehension due an art is one which evaluates it as it is in itself, according to its merits and shortcomings in the means, manner and object of its creation.

The second chapter attempts a definition of mimesis, the act of imitating, as including three developmental moments: speculative, executive and appreciative, corresponding to the conception and creation of the work of art by the artist and its subsequent evaluation by the beholder. In addition, Chapter Two introduces the designation that mimesis, in all its moments,

of consistency in speech and in the interpretation of the action. Since its action is accomplished by characters, this section of Chapter Five concludes with a note on the ultimately demonstrative status of tragedy which affirms its necessary dependence on reason in its creation.

The last section of Chapter Five examines the peculiar character of thought exemplified by the work of art, particularly in the tragic form, with reference to Mario Untersteiner's book, The Sophists. Again, the operation of imaginative reason is affirmed as necessary to the creation of works of art.

A consideration of the means by which thought is expressed in tragedy (diction, poetic technique) leads us directly to Aristotle's Rhetoric from whose statements we are immediately involved in a consideration of the function of thought as it affects the beholder of the work of art.

Chapter Four demonstrates the manner by which one may create different forms of art by emphasizing each of the parts of tragedy in turn and carries on the task of Chapter Three, offering a justification of the origination of style in the element of unity which arises out of the artists' conception of the work. There follows a discussion of the universality of the work of art and the specific demands it makes on the beholder of the work of art in order to emphasize the function of thought in tragedy and other works.

The manner in which the principle of unity is discussed in reference to universality will involve the reader in a consideration of technique and its necessary relation to thought.

Chapter Four concludes with an explanation of the difference between thought as expressed in the tragic form by the characters and thought as causally related to the work of art generally.

The first section of Chapter Five deals with the contribution of character to the tragic form under two of the four Aristotelian recommendations made concerning it, that they be good and like reality. That they be consistent is explained by an examination of poetic technique and that is elaborated through illustrations

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Introduction

A work of art is not an object in the same way as is a pencil, a knife or an apple. Its components, the stuff of which it is made, can be drawn from many and divers things, from ideas, emotions, colours, people, situations, sounds and the form of the work of art can express an endless variety and range of subjects compounded of them. Thus the painter uses his brushes, canvas, paints and knives to achieve a material representation of the object of his imitation, the musician sounds his instrument with breath, hand and foot to the creation of music, the dancer prevails upon his whole body to portray a character or nuance of colour or suggestion of weight or lightness but the work of art is not to be found in any one of these material means alone which constitute the work of art as a material object. Thus when the playwright creates his play, the words and actions which he sets down are not to be equated with the play as a complete piece of literature or a performed work. This is not only because we can read and hear the words spoken and understand and see the action of the play through them in a consecutive manner in time so that we might

say, "I know, remembering the play, that my knowledge of it was not complete at any one time," because even after the play has been heard, seen and understood, we can return to it again and again or we may retain memories of it and thoughts about it and for this reason the means by which the work of art came to be are the bearers of its meaning and are not the meaning itself.

Furthermore, the means to the work of art's creation, be they the paints of the painter or the notes of the musician, actual materials or words in a language, are so composed in the work of art that one glance at it, one sound or touch of it and we are aware that it is not an object of nature's creation nor is it an object of material utility; neither can we say of it that it has arisen by chance nor from a source which is other than human for if the work of art is typical of anything it is typical of man. Thus because the work of art is removed in its relation to man and the world from the relationship of utility of a natural object or a tool, it invites man to ascribe to it his own meanings and interpretations and uses where he finds them. The art object is the content from which man draws the form.

Not only is the form of the work of art a different thing than its content but the form of the work of art varies, changes, grows or diminishes every time man confronts it. In this it is not unlike philosophy which in contemplating its objects is enriched and grows through them yet its contemplations once recorded, philosophy must return again to contemplation leaving the shells of its endeavours as signs of what it has grasped. It is only in contemplation, that it knows and knowing is the activity of philosophy. Yet it also knows that there is the greatest degree of probability that it will not know even one of its objects totally much less all of the objects which it would know. Still, what remains of the contemplation, either a remembered or a recorded knowledge of it is not unphilosophical simply because it is not in the act of its acquisition.

Similarly, art is not always the same in its conception as in its produced or finished form, yet both its creation and conception are artistic. The work of art, like philosophical writing, requires that it be comprehended in some fashion in order that it may come to be for the beholder or student of philosophy what it is.

Art requires its beholder and philosophy its student for it to be; both require that a communication be effected between it and human beings in order that art and philosophy may exist. In communicating itself art does not use the same means from one of its forms to another and certainly it does not employ the same means as does philosophy.

Though philosophy and art draw from the same sensual sources to carry out their respective enterprises, philosophers have relegated art to an inferior position on their ontological and epistemological scales. The result has been to associate sensation and imagination with art, on the one hand, and reason and understanding with philosophy, on the other.

The purpose of this thesis is to show the place of imagination as it functions with reason in the creation of the work of art and to demonstrate that its means of communication, while having been in past grounded in sensual experience, have broadened to include rational objects just as philosophy has, in its history, left solved and behind it problems which were perplexing in the extreme to previous ages.

One does not consider simple imitations, such as bird calling or costuming to be works of art just

as we no longer think that the philosophy of a Thales is as piercing as that of an Aristotle or an Aquinas.

The means of playing a wind instrument, for example, are harmony and rhythm produced by the breath and its effect upon the instrument as it passes though it. The very most one could discern from an unmusical use of such an instrument would be a particular sound, constant insofar as the breath could support it, repeated until the player either became interested enough to experiment or weary enough to stop blowing air into it. The advance from simply blowing air into the instrument to pressing the valves which alter the pitch of the notes perhaps does not indicate that a great rational action has taken place (at least not in an age in which we are all familiar with the workings of several musical instruments); but if we step outside our time and try to consider the magnitude of such an advance on behalf of the player of the first such instrument, it seems not so mean an achievement. Without his imagination, his previous experience of the effect of a passage of air through an enclosure and the intelligence to devise a way in which to control it to the end of production of sound, we would be puffing into reeds vainly till this day.

Mimesis, imitation taken simply, was a beginning of a way in which men found they could create the first humble efforts of art and upon its basis great works of art have been produced. Modest wonder was the cause which, as Aristotle tells us, first prompted men to philosophize and it has been responsible for the complex systems of thought that have since emerged; yet neither simple imitation nor wonder could have produced the literature of Gustave Flaubert nor the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Achievement challenges any followers in any field to overcome previous advances, incorporating what has gone before the striving to perfect it in the light of newer and better findings, so that while the basis upon which such achievments are made may remain untouched, the thing achieved may have within it such novel, and hitherto unused content that it scarcely resembles the basis from which it was begun. So it is with art and with philosophy, both of which have undergone many changes of form in their histories while having begun in great simplicity. Nevertheless, art even at its simplest level was not a chance operation. Aristotle tells us that the tragedy evolved through improvisation which implies that a conscious effort was undertaken to perfect it as an art form

and, therefore, we suggest that art of all kinds involves us in a rational endeavour, the meanings of whose communications may lead us using different means to those objects contemplated by philosophy.

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Chapter One

Plato and Rhetoric

This chapter will explain what can be briefly stated as follows:

Perhaps prompted by the desire to discover the uses to which the Sophists, who were themselves educators, put the art of rhetoric, Plato's interest in rhetoric lay in determining its educative capacity. However, the moral and speculative purposes of Platonic education could not be accomplished through the use of rhetoric as it existed in Plato's day. Determining the educative capacities of rhetoric in terms of purpose, Plato contrasts the actual form of the art with his idealization of it and with that form of argument i.e. dialectic, better suited to the achievement of rational knowledge, the end of Platonic education. Plato's criticism of rhetoric does not, therefore, apply to it as an art in itself but only externally, in its relation to a proposed purpose which is irrelevant to its own purpose of communication.

In the Platonic dialogue Gorgias, entertaining the thought of rhetoric as an art form ".... is a

custom more honour'd in the breach than the observance."[1] Following an exchange between Socrates and Gorgias which seems to aim at determining the character and function of the art of rhetoric,[2] Plato interrupts the speakers in the person of Gorgias' young student, Polus, whose impatience and lack of experience enable Socrates to command the course of dialogue and contribute nearly all of the comment.

It is difficult not to sympathize with the disillusionment which led Plato to distrust the political system of his day. The seventh letter of Plato to the friends and companions of Dion, records Plato's youthful hope of one day entering upon a political career and his subsequent abandonment of the idea because of the impossibility of governmental reform:

> "...I...finally saw clearly in regard to all states now existing that without exception their system of government is bad. Their constitutions are almost beyond redemption except through some miraculous plan accompanied by good luck."[3]

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[1] Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene IV.

[2] Plato, The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Gorgias, E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, ed. (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), 461a, pp. 243-244. Hereafter all references to Plato will be made to the Bollingen edition in pagination and Stephanus numbering.

[3] Plato, Letters VII, 327a, p. 1576.

Such an attitude however does not justify imputing those faults inherent in the government which employs them to rhetoricians and their art. "Rhetoric in my opinion is the semblance of a part of politics...Bad - for evil things I call bad...."[4]

By its nature the art of rhetoric, functioning as the communicative arm of the body politic, necessarily reflected the beliefs of the political structure of Greece. Rhetoric bears the brunt of Plato's criticism which rightly belongs to the government. The representative aspect which made possible the introduction of political content into the rhetorical speech is essential to and characteristic of the function of rhetoric, i.e. communication. This rhetorical characteristic enables Plato to construct a condemnation of all of rhetoric if the fault is actually to be found with it, because when speaking about political questions, the rhetorician cannot help but immerse himself in the political subject. Plato fails to excuse rhetoric simply because it is capable of effecting persuasion in the political arena. Yet rhetoric is indifferent to the subject of which it treats and concerns itself

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[4]Plato, Gorgias, 463d, p. 246.

only with finding in it the available means of persuasion. It is a sham only if it furthers injustice. When it succeeds in furthering just ends it is acceptable. Because dialectic might better serve the interests of justice does not imply that rhetoric is a blatant evil. If our eyes cannot see do we pluck them out? Because rhetoric is capable of effecting persuasion proves that it is capable of effecting communication with its audience. More correctly employed it might have proven indispensible to the body politic. "Its possible abuse is no argument against its proper use on the side of truth and justice."[5]

In the dialogue, Socrates remarks:

> "I say, Polus, that orators and tyrants have the very least power of any in our cities...for they do practically nothing that they will, but do only what seems best to them."[6]

The rhetorician is only the mouthpiece of the state when he delivers speeches whose entire purpose is to impose upon the populace the desires of the state.

Suppose however, that an assembly of Plato's

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[5]W. R. Roberts, trans., The Works of Aristotle, Rhetoric, W. D. Ross, ed., (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1959), Book I, C.I. Hereafter all references to Aristotle's Rhetoric will be made to the Oxford edition.

[6]Plato, Gorgias, 466d, p. 248.

friends were to employ a rhetorician urging the conference of an honour upon him. The content of that rhetorician's speech, would concern the adoption of the suggestion. It is unlikely that Plato would insist as he does in Gorgias, that the rhetorician, speaking in the interest of his honour and in compliance with the wishes of his friends, was a fool uttering flatteries.[7]

This perhaps implausible example attempts to show that rhetorical speech need not exist exclusively as an organ of the state and that the art of rhetoric need not be considered inseparably coupled with any one subject area. It is, therefore, not subject to definition solely on the basis of the subject matter of which it treats.

An examination of the character and function of rhetoric as an art form will show that it aims not only at effecting the persuasion of the hearers of the speech from one point of view to another or at the

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[7] Plato, Gorgias, 464e, p. 247.

> "This then I call a form of flattery and I claim that this kind of thing is bad.....because it aims at what is pleasant, ignoring the good and I insist that this is not an art....because it can produce no principle in virtue of which it offers what it does, nor explain the nature thereof and consequently is unable to point to the cause of each thing it offers."

adoption of some new motion but more essentially at the effecting of change. At the beginning of the dialogue one remarks at the deftness with which Socrates directs the questioning into the political area and toward a consideration of the ethical conclusions to be drawn regarding the effects of rhetoric upon both. If one follows Plato's criticisms of rhetoric solely in terms of its political uses, rhetoric does indeed deserve the condemnation to which he assigns it.

It is ridiculous to deny that the art of rhetoric was actually practised in the assemblies and law courts of ancient Greece thus making it subject to political criticisms i.e. within the framework of the subject matter with which it dealt. "The kind of persuasion employed in the law courts and other gatherings.....and concerned with right and wrong."[8]

What, however, distinguishes the rhetorical as such? Can we not examine it as to its purposes independent of its subject matter? Socrates seems to indicate the possibility of such an examination when he questions Gorgias: "Now just what is the scope of rhetoric?"[9] However, at this point, without waiting

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[8]Plato, Gorgias, 454b, p. 237.

[9]Plato, Gorgias, 449d, p. 233.

for a reply, Socrates proceeds to venture some possibilities to which Gorgias responds. From the irregular responses of Gorgias, occasioned by the interruptions of Socrates, it is possible to find the reply to this question:

> "Because all the knowledge of the other arts is in general, Socrates, concerned with manual crafts and similar activities, whereas rhetoric deals with no such manual product but all its activities and all that it accomplishes is through the medium of words."[10]

Socrates fails to understand that the subject matter from which the rhetorical speech is drawn is accidental to it as an art form. By subject matter is meant the topic to which the rhetorical speech will pertain. The extent of rhetorical form was studied by students of rhetoric and consisted in the mastery of the collected modes of persuasion. The modes of persuasion, in the construction of the rhetorical speech have a definite bearing upon the topic. Those modes of persuasion selected and applied to the topic produce the content of the speech and also provide it with its particular form. In this consists the artistry of rhetoric.

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[10] Plato, Gorgias, 450c, pp. 233-234.

As we are told by Gorgias in the dialogue, the art of rhetoric is chiefly concerned with words but the art of arithmetic, used as a counter-example, is not. "....it is one of the arts which secure their effect through speech."[11] The function of discourse in arithmetic is an explanatory one. It serves as a medium in which to discuss arithmetical problems, methods and such and it may employ discourse as an amplificatory measure. While discourse may influence men's arithmetical speculations, embody such a speculation or fully describe in speech the workings of some arithmetical method, the function of arithmetic itself is confined to the operation of number which is, as speech is to rhetoric, its medium. Discourse if it effects arithmetic always remains external to its medium, the effects being arithmetically accomplished. I may explain to someone that two apples and two apples together make four apples, then introduce the symbols which arithmetically express the number of apples added together to arrive at the answer. It remains, however, that "2+2=4" is independent of the apples and the explanation I gave of the arithmetical expression. The employment of discourse stands in an

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[11] Plato, Gorgias, 451b, p. 234.

entirely different relation to rhetoric than it does to arithmetic.

As rhetoric employs discourse it creates and achieves its effects and ends. Rhetoric can employ discourse as an amplificatory measure, an argumentative device, in fact, it can employ discourse in as many ways as there are ends which it strives to meet and changes which it will effect. No amount of discourse however, will alter the sum of two plus two.

The end of discourse in rhetoric is, as is each particular discqurse whose end is considered rhetorical, contained and attained within the medium of discourse itself. The end of arithmetical discourse pertains to its relation to arithmetical operations and/or functions. In arts other than those of a rhetorical nature the word is not the chief means of expression. Although both rhetoric and arithmetic are "Creator[s] of persuasion"[12] they stand in very different relations to their respective ends.

Rhetorical speeches cannot be arithmetically expressed (though arithmetical questions can be posed and arithmetical conclusions debated in discourse) because their sole means of expression is that of

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[12]Plato, Gorgias, 453e, p. 237.

discourse. "....rhetoric deals with no such manual product but all its activity and all that it accomplishes is through the medium of discourse."[13] Rhetorical discourse being its own medium of expression, contains its end but arithmetical discourse is external and not necessarily related to arithmetical ends. The rhetorical speech accomplishes its aim as written when taken as written. As a delivered speech before an audience, it accomplishes its aim through the same medium.

Because it employs discourse, rhetoric must necessarily discourse about something. It is for precisely this reason that rhetoric is attacked in Gorgias but it is only within the political sphere that rhetoric can be the forger of human wills in the fire of persuasion.

Plato could rightly accuse the rhetorician of accomplishing through the use of rhetoric those aims of the government which he considered to be evil but his accusation unjustly discredits the art form which must rely upon the artist for its execution and which, because of the controversial areas from which the speech may be constructed, draws misplaced criticism from him.

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[13]Plato, Gorgias, 450c, p. 233-234.

Rhetoric relies upon the rhetorician in whose hands it may be misused. The rhetorician may deliver or construct the speech so as to render it beneath adequate rhetorical standards. What conclusions may be drawn regarding the status of such a rhetorician will be examined later.

The potentially communicative aspect of rhetoric is made to appear as an inherent deficiency of the art. "Then the rhetorician too does not instruct courts and other assemblies about right and wrong, but is able only to persuade them...."[14] If rhetoric creates only a belief and gives no instruction, then it is possible that the subject of which it treats is misrepresented. It is not a necessary condition of rhetorical speech that it fail to instruct, and although this is not its goal, it is not outside the realm of possibility that it do so.

> "The true and the approximately true are apprehended by the same faculty; it may also be noted that men have a sufficient natural instinct for what is true and usually do arrive at the truth. Hence a man who makes a good guess at truth is likely to make a good guess at probabilities."[15]

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[14] Plato, Gorgias, 455a, p. 238.

[15] Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355a 15.

The education of the rhetorician gives no indication that the rhetorician base his speech on ignorance and lack of information. On the basis of his acquired skills in the art he constructs his speeches which are of course, supposed to persuade. However he could not even begin to do so without the knowledge of the subjects of political, forensic and/or epideictic oratory to which the modes of persuasion are subjected and towards the adoption or rejection of which the modes of persuasion are formulated and employed.[16] Guided by these subjects which are themselves bodies of knowledge the rhetorician employs the modes of persuasion as they are suitable to his particular task. As he errs in the assessment of the subject he will err correspondingly in the employment of the persuasive modes; the opposite case will also follow:

> ".....rhetoric is not bound up with a single, definite class of subjects, but is as universal as dialectic; .... its function is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow."[17]

Therefore, should a given rhetorical speech proceed in

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[16]Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355b (5); 1359b-1360a (39).

[17]Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355b.

a manner which fails to employ the modes of persuasion to this end, it would be inadmissable as rhetorical speech.

If it were only the misuse of rhetoric which Plato wished to criticize, such criticism would be well taken. However Plato's criticism does not find its object. Socrates notices this inadequacy but does not seem to consider it significant. It is simply stated with no further comment:

> "Now at the time when you stated this, I considered that rhetoric could never be a thing of evil, since its discourse is always concerned with justice. But when a little later you said that the rhetorician might actually make an ill use of rhetoric, I was surprised....what was said was inconsistent."[18]

When the rhetorician through ignorance or deliberate contrivance misuses rhetoric, that misuse renders the speech faulty in form and is a sufficient condition for its not being accepted as rhetorical speech. If we accept this criterion of judging the completeness of form as necessarily present to the speech in order that it qualify as rhetorical, then Plato's criticisms are simply misdirected. His criticisms of the misuse of rhetoric fail to shed any light on what he may have criticized in rhetoric itself. Furthermore, after a

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[18]Plato, Gorgias, 461a, p. 243.

short interchange with Polus in which Socrates tries to begin the questioning anew, Socrates reveals that he does not believe rhetoric to be an art at all, but the "semblance of a part of politics."[19]

In Gorgias, Plato is not really concerned with rhetoric per se. As we have shown, a rhetorical speech and a faulty speech which unsuccessfully attempts to satisfy rhetorical form are not the same things. If Plato saw rhetoric as nothing more than the continually failing attempt to dialecticize, then all of his criticisms of it are inapplicable to it because he does not distinguish rhetoric as such but only as something similar to another method of argument which he esteems more valuable. "For my part," Socrates admits, "I do not know whether this is the rhetoric which Gorgias practises..."[20]

When the student of rhetoric in learning and attempting to formulate and deliver a rhetorical speech falls into error, he is guilty of misusing rhetoric, no matter how innocent his intentions. When the rhetorician either deliberately or without forethought is shown to have misused rhetoric the grounds of judging

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[19]Plato, Gorgias, 463d, p. 246.

[20]Plato, Gorgias, 463a, p. 245.

misuse are the standards of correct rhetorical form without which one would be incapable of making any such judgment. The contradiction which Polus accuses Socrates of making is really not the paradox he believes it to be.[21] Rather than regard the ill use of rhetoric as an inconsistency, it is more conducive to getting at "....where the truth lies,"[22] to regard its misuse as the contradiction Polus mentions, making of misuse the necessary and sufficient condition for its not being accepted as rhetoric at all.

We impune misuse to the extent that rhetoric is deficient in form and therefore not completely rhetorical. If not fully rhetorical the speech can be considered, because of this deficiency, to be unrhetorical. It is noteworthy that Socrates appeals only to his own belief in this matter. The sophist, Protagoras, holds a contrary view:

> "Protagoras plainly feels that rhetoric is a master-art. It is much the same thing as what in another dialogue is referred to as the 'royal' art of governing human beings. In a word, it is the art of social and political 'weaving' which belongs at least

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[21]Plato, Gorgias, 462c, p. 244.

[22]Plato, Gorgias, 461b, p. 244.

to the level of dianoia."[23]

Socrates simply denies that rhetoric is an art, denouncing it as a counterfeit and a flattery. The questioner and the questioned are not even discussing the nature of the art from two extremes of the same consideration. They are, although perhaps unbeknownst to one another, not discussing the same thing at all. It is not surprising that the orator and the philosopher fail to shed much light on the nature of the art when the former cannot develop his opinions believing himself caught in a contradiction and the latter is already confirmed in his opinions and seeks only to substantiate and uphold them.

The would-be rhetorician must first receive instructions in his art and until such times as he satisfies the demands of such a study, he cannot (assuming of course that the study is legitimate) be said by himself or others to be a rhetorician. The rhetorician meeting these demands does in fact know what is just, does conduct himself justly and cannot, within the limits of his knowledge, knowingly make an ill use of rhetoric. Undoubtedly in Plato's time there

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[23]R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, (New York: The Humanities Press, 1953), p. 69. Hereafter, all references to R. C. Lodge will be made to this volume.

were many rhetoricians who did not satisfy the ideal requirements which he desired of them in order that he might assign them their professional titles without flinching. In his estimation, they were not rhetoricians. Plato really defines the rhetorician in Gorgias, by means of his criticisms, according to his own ideal standards and he denounces the actuality which went by the name of rhetorician and rhetoric.

> "What Plato does, is to interpret and synthesize the views of his contemporaries balancing them one against the other in the light of the Socratic criticism. What Socrates criticized was the status of the actual as such. This status was accepted by his contemporaries. What Socrates asked, was whether the actual, as such, came up to the requirements of the ideal: The idea which (at least vaguely) is at the back of all our minds.
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> Socratic criticism, when applied to the theories of the humanists, of the mathematicians and of the early positivists of Ionia, simliarly shows that all such schools rest upon, and are satisfied with, the actual."[24]

The criticisms which Plato levels at the speech-makers of his day are actually inapplicable to them. He draws the rhetorician, his character and his status, from his imagination, creating his ideal rhetorical artist in the antithesis of the actual existing rhetorical artist of his day. Naturally, the

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[24] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, p. 77.

shortcomings of the actuality are irrelevant to the full-panoplied excellences of the ideal, just as the excellences of the ideal do not pertain to the actuality.

Socrates introduces the consideration that the rhetorician can have no real power in the state, "...for they do practically nothing that they will, but do only what seems best to them."[25]

The ideal rhetorician, as imagined by Plato, would never encounter such a predicament, for either he would be in agreement with the proposal to be put forth in his oration, or he would be found to refuse to compose and deliver the oration because he would judge its aim as unjust and his training and sense of justice would forbid him to use rhetoric to perpetrate an injustice. Because the rhetorician, in order to satisfy the definition which Plato would have of him, must be a just man[26] he would either ally himself with the proposal which the government wished to put to the poeple (that proposal being worthy of his support because of its just nature), or he would refuse to do so, judging the proposal unjust and therefore unworthy

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[25]Plato, Gorgias, 466e, p. 249.

[26]Plato, Gorgias, 460c, p. 243.

of his support. In either one of the aforementioned cases, the rhetorician would certainly be engaged in an exercise of will, albeit he would be exercising it in co-operation and in conjunction with the governing body requesting the oration of him. In this regard the rhetorician might find himself curtailed in fully expressing his will, for such a circumstance excludes the possibility of his offering whatever he might consider to be a proposal superior to that which the government asks him to extend. However, insofar as the proposal was not counter to the aims of justice, by giving the oration he would be exercising his will, just as by refusing to compose and deliver what he might have considered to be an unjustly founded proposal, he would similarly be exercising his will.

Obviously those circumstances in which an orator was forced by the governing body to deliver an unjustly founded speech against his will would absolve him personally and artistically of those charges of injustice which might follow.

The entire criticism presented in Gorgias and launched against the authenticity of rhetoric as an art may very well be definitive, introducing new standards and requirements to which rhetoric might aspire. However, these definitive sketches represent

possibilities which might be adopted by the artistic community and do not carry with them any necessary compulsion that they be adopted as definitive of truth. We further note that the dialogue Gorgias exemplifies, particularly in the lengthy passages with which it concludes, rhetorical technique. Socrates abandons the dialectical method for exhortatory, persuasive methods of argument. That in itself is paradoxical for it is the dialectical method which Plato advocates in the Gorgias, while at the same time, using rhetorical technique to set forth his argument.

In view of the essentially communicative purpose and function of the art of rhetoric, the attempt to define or employ it without taking this end into consideration is of negligible consequence in determining the nature of the art and its function. Such a consideration is necessary to the comprehension of the way in which rhetoric functions in itself and within the tragic form. As we shall demonstrate in our treatment of thought, a part of the tragic form, its function is solely that of communicating itself by means of rhetoric.

That thought is necessary to the creation of the work of art will be demonstrated in the following chapter which deals with the act of mimesis in all its

forms; that it is basic to the creation of tragedy, in conjunction with the imaginative faculty will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapter(s) explicating the interrelations and interrelated functions of the parts of the tragic form.

Chapter Two

Mimesis: Speculative, Executive and Appreciative

This chapter will explain the manner in which a work of art comes to be. Of central importance to this is the exercise of thought without which no work of art could exist. Since the work of art is one undertaken by a human being, an artist, its creation and ontological status upon completion must be examined in its totality in the relationships between the speculative, executive and appreciative moments of its development. The relationships between the moments themselves in the work of art are all entirely dependent upon the exercise of thought without which the work of art and any of its developmental moments would be indiscernible.

Mimesis is an action or an activity. It is peculiar to the act of imitation that it cannot be regarded as such unless it be executed in some way, for there is no fashion in which imitation can be accomplished without action.

As a speculative activity mimesis can be regarded as the cause or basis of a work of art or it can remain

simply within the confines of thought as an hypothesis;[27] as an executive activity, it is concerned with an expression which, unlike the speculative activity that may remain indefinitely in the realm of thought, strives to find an empirical expression. As an appreciative activity mimesis involves both the creator and the beholder of the work of art in empirically verifiable activity, i.e. criticism, appreciation.

Without involving ourselves for the present in a consideration of the degree to which sensual involvement may be essential to the arts, suffice it to say that all of art proceeds from the execution of the mimetic act, whether it be speculative or executive in nature.

Mimesis, then, is a productive activity, but what produces mimesis itself?

Aristotle establishes that poetry in a mode of imitation, as are all the arts:[28]

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[27]Aristotle, Metaphysics, The Basic Works of Aristotle, R. McKeon, ed., (New York: Random House Inc., 1941), 1025b 9-15, p. 778. Hereafter all references to the Metaphysics will be made to the McKeon edition in pagination and Bekker numbering.

"...all these sciences mark off some particular being - some genus, and inquire into this, but not into being simply...but starting from the essence - some making it plain to the senses, others assuming it as an hypothesis, - then they demonstrate....the essential attribute of the genus with which they deal."

[28]Aristotle, Poetics, 1447a.

> "It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world and learns at first by imitation."[29]

As "All men by nature desire understanding,"[30] mimesis as executed by man is undertaken because of his desire to know and is therefore, a rational activity. Aristotle tells us that the work of art is distinguished by its means (i.e., rhythm, language, harmony), its object which is action (i.e., dance, characterization, mime)[31] and its manner of imitation (i.e., poetry, narrative, drama).[32]

From these distinctions we can see that art imitates its object, the object being of a certain kind and imitated in a certain way. The kind and manner of the imitation directly relate to the object and the object greatly influences the kind and manner of imitation. At its inception, the artist first desires

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[29]Aristotle, Poetics, 1447a.

[30]Aristotle, Metaphysics, 980a, p. 12.

[31]Action is, of course, expressible through all the forms of movement variously from art to art.

[32]Aristotle, Poetics, 1447b-1448b.

to create the work, this state of desire being necessary to the conception of the work of art itself. The conception of the work of art is creatively imaginative and it is a mimetic act, the speculative act.

The artist from his experience, knowledge and imagination selects the idea or ideas from and with which he will work.

> "You ask if during the composition of this Symphony any definite programme was in mind....how can one describe those indefinite sentiments which fill one during the composition of an untitled instrumental work. It is a purely lyrical process. It is the musical confession of the soul, in which much material has accumlated, which now flows forth in tones, just as a lyric poet expresses himself in verses.... Generally the germ of the work appears with lightning suddenness, quite unexpectedly. If the germ falls on fertile soil - that is to say, when the desire to work is felt - it takes root with incredible strength and rapidity....."[33]

The above passage serves to point out the seeming unity which may be thought to exist between the conception and execution of the work of art. The work must be executed in order that it come to be what it is but it cannot be executed without its first having been conceived.

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[33] E. Evans, Tchaikovsky, (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. i.

It is the conception of the work, necessarily prior to the execution of the work of art, which we call the speculative act. Since the conceived thought imitates the potentially empirical work of art, the speculative act is mimetic even though it is not empirically manifest. Just as the modes of imitation are thrice distinguished, the mimetic act (the action) as speculation (kind) is constituted by the reason of the artist in conjunction with his imagination which produce the object. Because the exercise of the imagination is essential and incorporate in the conceptualization and execution of all works of art, the mimetic act, while rational, is hypothetical[34] particularly in its speculative form.

The artist has before him, empirically speaking, only the media for the execution of his work. Without the occurrence of prior speculation, the media must remain untouched and no work of art <u>can</u> be produced. After this fashion, scientific thought can be considered artistic when concerned with the formulation of theory which is subsequently formally expressed.

Furthermore, it is not possible for an artist to <u>unknowingly</u> imitate his object. (An onlooker, for

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[34]See footnote n. 27, p. 23.

example, may think that a painter whom he observes at work on a canvas has produced a work of art. The artist, however, will not recognize his work as such unless it expresses the object of selection in the manner according to which he has chosen to give it expression.)

But what does man do when he imitates?

> "In mimesis (as in aesthesis, sense-perception) we have two factors, one objective, the other subjective. The artist, in interacting with the object he is imitating, puts something of himself into the picture. This makes the reluctant art work not just a picture, but his picture. It is only partly objective. It is the object-as-seen by the artist, his interpretation or impersonation of the object..... In a word, in mimesis, i.e., in impersonating, merging his personality with, a given object, the artist, however well or badly he succeeds in reproducing the object, is inevitably expressing himself."[35]

This self-expression is motivated by and is itself indicative of the desire to know. Art is irrational only if the desire to now is irrational.

> "Let us know consider (b) the second, the 'assimilative' effect of mimesis. In assimilating himself, the artist does something, not to the object but to himself; something quite different from merely releasing feeling. He merges himself with the object, projects himself into it. In imaginative sympathy, he participates in its nature. His feelings become

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[35] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, (New York: The Humanities Press, 1953), p. 179.

> directed from without. They are subdued rather than released. In so far as they take on the nature of the object, they become objectified."[36]

These two effects of mimesis, self-expression and objectification are elements in the work of art which, when the work of art is indeed so, emerge as a unity. Unlike the more widely accepted notion of objectification which externalizes the object the writer in the above quotation speaks of the artist merging himself, projecting himself, participating in the nature of the object. This is a kind of objectification which does not carry with it a notion of impregnable externality nor is it the sort of objectification with which one sometimes regards the self-sufficient body of knowledge which can never altogether be encompassed or assimilated because it stands, as it were, on its own and is never totally within our grasp. The rather evasive observation to be made in considering the operation of self-expression and objectification as the artist employs them, or for that matter, as anyone striving to know would employ them is this: self-expression is only possible when the self is in possession of some emotion, idea, etc., which it wishes to express. The instant the self conceives of its expression, or gives vent to its

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[36] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, p. 180.

expression or acquires the stimulus which it at some time expresses, that expression is itself objectified, by the self. Similarly, the object which the artist wishes to assimilate is, upon its assimilation, no longer external to him and is incorporated into his own make-up, becoming part of himself. Therefore, the expression and the assimilated object become one through the artist in the work of art.

Subjectivity and objectivity are nothing more than dispositions of the intellect towards those objects which it would know. Objectivity has not come to man from the heavens, or if it has, it has not been any more supernaturally distinguished than has subjectivity. All bodies of knowledge which are professed to be objective could never have come to be so had not individuals, by contributing their own subjective findings, arrived at the conclusions of their collective contributions. The conclusions, which include some and exclude other of these subjective elements, are broader in scope when drawn from the studies of many than when drawn from the studies of one, however, they could not have been formulated without the subjective elements. Subjective knowledge is always actual to the knower, while objective knowledge may be only potential to him.

Nevertheless, both subjective and objective knowledge are grasped by the knower in a subjective manner.

Desire is an emotion, but rather than divorcing the influence of emotion from the intellect, the artist follows it through to the acquisition of knowledge. The artist, perhaps more than other men, accepts the necessary relation between mind and emotion, mind and body and welcomes the realization that it is not only through the intellect alone that he can learn and know. For the artist, knowledge is not apprehended solely through the exercise of reason amongst those things already reasoned or amongst the solely reasonable. If he regards sensual knowledge as one and intellectual knowledge as another kind of knowledge, he does not think them superior, one to the other, but rather mutually assistant in learning and knowing. All that is known must be sensed. Even in contemplation, the physical brain as well as the mind is occupied.

> "...mimesis appears to be of fundamental positive value in Plato's theory of education....The education for character and citizenship outlined in the Republic and Laws, rests very heavily upon mimesis, and indeed upon mimetic art."[37]

But Plato has no place in his ideal city for the

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[37] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, p. 169.

expression of the artist, nor for the artisan.

> "No citizen practises any utilitarian art; expecially for pay.
>
> As far as the work of artists is concerned the answer (to the question of whether individual citizens will engage in such work) is, no. The stories, hymns, march-tunes and the rest, which are current in the model city, are not the work of individual citizens, celebrated as 'artists' and paid or praised for the professional quality of their productions. They arise out of the community living, one and all, mimesis of the community ethos."[38]

The needless dispensing of the individual artist from the ideal city hinges on Plato's belief that the assimilative effect of art would make the artist uncontrollable and liable to degeneration and destruction.

> "A great deal depends upon the nature of the object to which the artist assimilates himself. Suppose he projects himself into a wild, frenzied dance, in honour.... of the god, Bacchus. He lets himself go: inviting alien, non-Hellenic influences to take control. In thus impersonating the god Bacchus.... he is practically ceasing to be a self-determining Hellenic citizen. Gone are his temperance, his sense of reverence and discipline, his feeling for prudence and wisdom, perhaps even his disciplined, civic courage... From the standpoint of the ideal republic and model city he is almost a total loss.
>
> If the object imitated is bad... mimesis is dangerous.... if the object impersonated is good.... mimesis is thoroughly approved."[39]

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[38] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, p. 186.

[39] R. C. Lodge, Plato's Theory of Art, p. 181.

If a basis is to be provided upon which to judge the goodness or evil of art be it not the conclusions drawn from a comparison which will not admit of contrast: the ballet furnishes a host of visual objects for our perception, but it is the perception of uniformity in movement, in this instance, the dance, which heightens our awareness of the object i.e. the dance and allows us to observe, if not its cause, at least its effect. The business of art lies not in impersonating the good but in impersonating well; nor is art the display receptacle for the demonstration of moral values, although it is not impossible, through an appreciation of art, to acquire a set of values.

The following excerpt contains the writing of a celebrated actor of the nineteenth century, Constant-Benoit Coquelin, a performer at the Comedie Francaise and manager of a Parisian theatre? He was known for his mastery of technique. In this extract Coquelin comments upon what effects assimilative mimesis may have upon the artist:

> "The theatrical world is divided into two opposing camps in regard to the question whether the actor should partake of the passion of the part.... I am convinced that one can only be a great actor on condition of complete self-mastery and ability to express feelings which are not experienced.... may never be experienced, which from the

> very nature of things can never be experienced.
>
> And this is the reason that our trade is an art, and this is the cause of our ability to create!
>
> The same faculty which permits the dramatic poet to bring forth... a Macbeth armed and equipt, altho... the poet be a thoroly upright and honest man, permits the actor to assimilate this character....without ceasing to be for an instant distinctly himself, as separate a thing as the painter and his canvas.
>
> The actor is within his creation, that is all."[40]

Plato must have been a confirmed member of what Coquelin would have considered his 'opposing camp.'

In the following statement, Coquelin establishes without a doubt, what he considered to be the criterion upon which to judge the actor and the non-actor. His remarks may be extended to include the disposition which might as well characterize the responses of the artist and the non-artist.

> "The actor ought never to let his part 'run away' with him. It is false and ridiculous to think that it is a proof of the highest art for the actor to forget that he is before the public. If you identify yourself with your part to the point of asking yourself, as you look at the audience, 'What are all those people doing here?' - if you have no more consciousness where you are and what you are doing - you have ceased to be an

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[40] Coquelin, Art and the Actor, trans., A. L. Alger, (U.S.A.: Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, 1915), p. 55-57.

actor: you are a madman."[41]

Let us now turn to the Platonic dialogue Ion and consider for a moment the remarks pertinent to the question of inspiration in works of art. The dialogue arrives at the conclusion that the artist (the rhapsode and the actor) creates only through inspiration rather than through any efforts on his part.

> "...This gift you have of speaking well on Homer....is a power divine, impelling you like the power in the stone Euripides called the magnet... This stone does not simply attract the iron rings, just by themselves; it also imparts to the rings a force enabling them to do the same thing as the stone itself, that is, to attract another ring, so that sometimes a chain is formed...of iron rings, suspended from one another. For all of them, however, their power depends upon that loadstone. Just so the Muse. She first makes men inspired, and then through these inspired ones others share in the enthusiasm, and a chain is formed, for the epic poets, all the good ones, have their excellence, not from art, but are inspired, possessed, and thus they utter all these admirable poems."[42]

A much less mysterious approach to the problem of inspiration arose out of the studies of the actor, director, teacher and founder of the Moscow Art Theatre, Konstantin Stanislavski. While Stanislavski

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[41]Coquelin, Actors on Acting, T. Cole and H. K. Chinoy, ed., (New York: Crown Publishers, 1949), p. 203.

[42]Plato, Ion, 533d-e, p. 219-220.

obviously considered inspiration the gift of some god, he undertook a search to find the difference in technique between the inspired and the uninspired performance. In this, his attitude is much more in keeping with the spirit of Socratic inquiry than is that displayed in the Ion where the supposition that the artist is inspired is simply accepted on the basis of an analogy between its effect and that of the magnet.

> "But how was one to make this condition [of being inspired] no longer a matter of mere accident, to create it at the will and order of the actor?
>
> If it is impossible to own it at once, then one must put it together bit by bit, using various elements for its construction. If it is necessary to develop each of the component elements in one's self separately, systematically, by a series of certain exercises - let it be so! If the ability to receive the creative mood in its full measure is given to the genius by nature, then perhaps ordinary people may reach a like state after a great deal of hard work with themselves....."[43]

At present there exists in writing and in training whose object it is to supply the actor with an approach to his art, a complete system of acting technique arrived at by Stanislavski in the light of his inquiries into the nature and function of inspiration.

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[43] Stanislavski, Actors on Acting, T. Cole and H. K. Chinoy, ed., (New York: Crown Publishers, 1949), p. 423.

Socrates supplies in the Ion a description of what the actor or rhapsode experiences when he is in an inspired state:

> "When you chant these, are you in your senses? Or are you carried out of yourself, and does not your soul in a ecstasy conceive herself to be engaged in the actions you relate, whether they are in Ithaca, or Troy, or whereever the story puts them?"[44]

What is the agent which carries the actor to the person or places in such a way that he seems actually to be with those persons and in those places?

Lifting the veil of mystery from the face of inspiration is accomplished through an examination of the agency of imagination. Inspiration is a gilded term used to indicate the artist's imaginative achievement. It is used to describe those occasions when the artist totally comprehends with his imagination the work of art which he designates for himself in his imagination. It is for this reason that directors of plays, for example, do not require notes on the manner in which the play is to be rehearsed. The director is already in possession of the interpretation that he wishes to assign to the production of the play. The interpreations of the

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[44]Plato, Ion, 535c, p. 221.

actors as well as the settings, costumes, properties, etc., are guided by the director toward the empirical execution of the play, the conception of which lies in the imagination of the director.

Inspired is an adjective which we assign to a work of art which, in its executed form is commensurate with the form it took in its conception. We hasten to add, however, that as the work of art is executed and is therefore able to be seen by its executor, the artist, the conception of the work may or may not be altered by him, because the executed work, when perceived by the artist, may serve as a conceptual stimulus to which the artist might respond. This possibility does not alter the work of art, since this occurrence is simply a repetition of the form of the first conception and serves the artist in the same manner. As to this kind of work of art, 'imaginative' is an adjective which would less obscurely describe it.

Such imaginative insight may be gained by the artist in various ways. He may, if he is an actor, discover the exactly satisfactory manner in which to portray the character he studies through a particular description of the character given in the script which provides him with a concept of the character as a living whole. Or he may, if he is a musician or a

painter, conceive of a theme or dominant colour respectively, which serve as precise vehicles for the execution of his work. The imaginative insight is not at all unlike the realization achieved by the student of mathematics, for example, when he grasps the solution of a problem hitherto incomprehensible.

Reason and intelligent imagination, not inspiration, promote works of art.

The work of art is not created pell-mell from a confusion nor is it a random juxtaposition of images, thoughts or incongruities. Reason is necessary to it in all its moments because the work of art by its nature is communicative. In order that something be communicated, it must first be realized and be capable of being communicated. This realization is a rational activity as is the effort which when brought to bear upon that capacity produces the actuality.

Chapter Three

Spectacle, Diction, Melody: their basis in tragedy

Our examination of the Poetics will show that the parts of tragedy, plot, character, thought, diction, melody and spectacle are subject to the most varied yet most strictly regulated applications in the presentation of the action of the play. This in itself is necessary to the particular tragic presentation and to the tragic form generally if the parts of the play are to be communicated as a unity by the action. Thus all the parts of tragedy serve the action inasmuch as they comprise it and are presented in it. The action communicates the tragedy as a unity and in each of the several moments as its action is presented. Because all of the action is devised by both playwright and actor we shall show that, of the parts of tragedy, thought is of primary causal importance to them all, that the action of the play is necessarily dependent upon it for its very existence and that the perceptive appreciation of the audience cannot occur without it. The following treatment of spectacle and unity will show the necessity of thought to the creation of each.

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, is a consummate literary art form. As such, it can be employed as paradigmatic of other art forms, literary or otherwise. The successful use of any one art form as paradigmatic of other art forms depends upon the use of universal principles which are better exemplified in the paradigm than in those ectypes which in relation to it are less complete.

That this is so as pertaining to the works of Aristotle as regards the Poetics is discernible from the criteria he provides for tragedy proper and from the short history of its development.

Although it is plausible that these criteria could have been accommodated to judge some other art form and although it is conceivable that the history could have been written to illustrate how these criteria would apply to any art form that had reached its natural term of development, it remains that tragedy, as Aristotle knew it, was the best possible choice to execute his general purpose in writing the Poetics. Because it had achieved a complete form possessing all the essential elements necessary to its definition, it was undoubtedly the best possible choice of paradigm.

To say of art that it requires speculation prior to its execution is to affirm that it is a work of

reason. To say that it is executed is to say that it is productive of an object and to say that it is appreciated implies that it is known and enjoyed.

The following remarks will serve to describe, in terms supplied by Aristotle and others, the requisites of dramatic art forms. This limitation is obviously necessary if the description is to lend itself to the elaboration of the more general theme of mimesis, as the title of this thesis conveys. To this end, we shall illustrate that the conception, execution and appreciation of the work of art is generally exhibited in tragedy.

Furthermore, each of these elements of the work of art is essential if and only if art is mimesis, for tragedy is an imitation.

Turning our attention directly to the Poetics, we find those executive elements of tragedy which will lead us to an understanding of combined elements of the work of art and their functions in its production.

> "Let us proceed now to the discussion of Tragedy; before doing so, however, we must gather up the definition from what has been said. A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself."[45]

Of the parts of tragedy, Aristotle enumerates six: spectacle, character, plot, diction, melody and thought.

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[45] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1449b(6).

The least important of all of these is the spectacle "... or stage appearance of the actors (which) must be some part of the whole."[46] Aristotle does not venture extensive comment regarding the purpose or effect of spectacle in the Poetics except to say that it has "... least to do with the art of poetry."[47] and is "... more a matter for the costumier than the poet."[48]

These remarks are not inconsistent with those conditions of staging which are thought to have evolved in ancient Greece. It was on the occasion of religious festivals that drama, specifically tragedy, was first performed. During the fifth century before Christ, the gods of the Greeks were worshipped at least once annually by all of the citizens of Greece. The more local festival, the Lenaia, was celebrated near the end of January and was usually held by each Greek city exclusively for its own citizens. The Lenaia came to be associated primarily with comedy.

The Rural Dionysia was held in December and it is

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[46]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1449(6).

[47]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450b.

[48]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450b-20.

not certain whether dramatic performances were given on its occasion.

The City Dionysia was celebrated at the end of March in honour of the advent of the god, Dionysus, to Athens. In Attica, of which Athens was the most prominent village, four festivals were annually celebrated in Dionysus' honour and it was at one of these festivals that the drama was first presented. The City Dionysia was both a civic and religious festival at which the entire country assembled for purposes of cultural exchange and enrichment as well as for religious reasons.[49] The Athenian state officially recognized and supported the drama in Greece which was under the general supervision of the principle magistrate of Athens.

Beginning about the year five hundred and one before Christ, the performance of part of his religious and civic duties was borne by a choregus, a man chosen by the magistrate from those wealthy citizens of Athens, whose responsibility it was to finance a large proportion of the production of the play.[50] Since it was within

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[49] O. G. Brockett, History of the Theatre, (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1968) pp. 11-21. Hereafter, all references to Brockett will be made to this volume.

[50] O. G. Brockett, History of Theatre, p. 22.

the realms of his jurisdiction to costume the actors and provide what settings the play might require, it is not implausible that the costumier, or as he is called today, the designer, would be responsible to the choregus for the execution of the play's designs and that he would also be subject to those restrictions of financing which the choregus must have assigned to those expenditures.

Because Aristotle regards the element of spectacle as least significant to the presentation of tragedy, it is not unlikely that the designer dealt more with the choregus than he did with the dramatist in designing the play.

It is, however, the accepted practice in the theater today that the costumes, properties and settings, while designed by a specialist, i.e. a designer, are so designed and executed as to meet the artistic demands of the director and are therefore an integral part of the artistic endeavour from prerehearsal preparations.

It is difficult to conceive of any play at any era in time being written, much less presented, in which there was not rendered some suggestion of setting by even the most intangible or subtle of means. The lighting of the play is often regarded as the principle provider of the setting, with the physical settings

within it considered second in importance because it would be impossible to see them without the aid of light, but even according to such consideration, the play is consistently rendered within some kind of space, some represented delineation and the kind of space rendered as setting for the play usually suggests the kind of costuming which would be suitably harmonious within it.

Because "... tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of actions and life, of happiness and misery,"[51] it is not necessary to the playing of tragedy that special settings and costumes be used.

We are all familiar with productions of tragedy which have not been enhanced by even the most well-designed and beautifully constructed settings and costumes. Conversely, in those productions of tragedy which are sufficiently well performed, the presence of a workable setting and costume design does much to heighten the general effect of the play. Comparatively viewed, the element of spectacle may be regarded as so closely related to the representation of the unity of the plot as to be integral to it.

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[51]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450b II.

Aristotle tells us that the most important of all parts of the tragedy is its plot and in his consideration of it, treats of unity in terms of magnitude. Whether or not the play is elaborately set physically or whether the place within which the action is performed relies for its presence more upon the speeches given by the actors, enabling the audience to actively participate in the imaginative creation of the physical setting (or further, whether considerations of specific physical place are irrelevant to the action of the play), the play still requires a setting, even if it be defined predominantly as a generally intangible or abstract thing such as a mood, climate or emotion, for a play is a thing which requires the presence of a place and a duration of time in which to complete its action and this is true of both the written and performed form.

Of course, when Aristotle speaks of magnitude, he does not speak of it as a quantitative element, but as a qualitative element because of its relation to the unity of the plot which is entirely a consideration of the quality of tragedy. The designer does precisely the opposite, considering the design of the play as a quantitative addition to the play, intended to affect its quality.

The physical representation of a specific setting is made to serve by heightening the tragic effect and it does so by providing a basis upon which to construct a particular interpretation of the play as performed by the actors and as appreciated by the audience. Spectacle is always subservient to the establishment of unity of plot. It is only when another of the elements of tragedy is deficient in conception or becomes so in its performance that the spectacle appears overwhelming in relation to the whole. This circumstance occurs due to the failure of one element to retain its correct place in the tragedy which is, as we have seen, a complex of parts assembled into unity, and it results in the creation of an imbalance which destroys this former unity.

Let us now consider the importance of a facet of spectacle which is so integral a part of drama as to be easily overlooked and that is the stage, a term which has come to be synonymous with drama itself. As regards the Greek stage, considerable controversy exists as to whether or not its physical structure was elevated. Since there are no archaeological remains of a stage from the fifth century and since there are no extant plays requiring one, some shcolars think that there was none. However, since extant plays

do indicate the necessity of varying physical levels to and from which the actors might ascend and descend, and since ancient commentators unanimously agreed that the theatre of the fifth century did have a raised stage, other scholars think that there actually was such a stage at the time.[52]

Whether or not the physical acting area was or was not raised, it remains that this most basic requirement of drama, specifically tragedy, is the most essentially spectacular of the elements of play production, introducing us to the nature of the play and thus to the nature of tragedy since all tragedies are plays.

The election of a specific place, whether elevated or not, in which to perform an action which is to be witnessed by an audience, is at once indicative of deliberate contrivance and as such, is while not unnatural, not indicative of spontaneity and chance provision. Because drama in general and tragedy in particular employs human beings as agents with which to execute the action of the plot, more noticeably than in the cases of other art forms, tragedy shows man to himself. Although there have been plays which did not avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the

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[52] O. G. Brockett, History of the Theatre, p. 36.

inclusion of characters,[53] the majority of plays which do so concern themselves with questions or problems which deal with those human relationships within which the question or problem has arisen.

The actual setting aside of a physical area for purposes of observing the action of any thing alerts us to that feature of intentionality which is at the source of the conception, production and appreciation of all drama and hence, tragedy. The physical specification of place enables the plot of the play to be perceived and presented as a unity, without which its perception and presentation would be impossible. The setting imparts a limitation or confine necessary to the enactment of what Aristotle considers to be the most important part of tragedy, the plot.

The wearing of masks by the actors achieves an unquestionable visual unity just as the form of movement of classical ballet invests the art of the ballet with its unity of expression.[54] The wearing of costumes (by the first century before Christ, the actor of tragedy wore a padded costume, boots which were very thick-soled and large headdresses to augment his size to larger than life appearance)[55] added to the

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[53]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450a 23-24.

[54]See p. 29 above.

[55]O. G. Brokett, History of the Theatre, p. 48.

accomplishment of unity and together, masks and costumes produced the style of performance which could not but draw attention to the fact that while the action being performed was previously contrived, its enactment was amplified by the connotation of visual specifications. This further unified the productions and assisted their purpose of achieving the end of the plot "...and the end is everywhere the chief thing."[56]

Unity of plot can easily be upheld in spite of vast changes in geographical setting, for instance as it may be required for the presentation of the plot in the film. The controlling factor in this case is the medium of the film itself in conjunction with its adherence to the plot line. In the theatre since the audience cannot physically traverse the geographical distance represented in the plot in all cases, the controlling element of unity must be undertaken by the playing area or setting, which is capable of being perceived at all times by the audience.

While it is not necessary to the execution of tragedy that costumes and settings be constructed, we hope to have shown that a physically designated playing area is an absolute necessity for the presentation and perception of a unified plot, and

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[56]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450a (20-25).

further, that this necessary designation of space is the basis upon which spectacle rests its foundations. Therefore, spectacle, as it denotes costumes and denotative settings, is not necessary to the production of tragedy for either the actors or the audience, but it can serve to unify the plot to the maximum. Its effect on the unity of the play could be best demonstrated in those productions in which "... the scene is laid in the nether world."[57] Under such circumstances, the credibility of the entire play would rest upon the spectacle.

The following treatment of diction and melody is an attempt to show that the intricacies of language itself and the employment of melody within the structure of tragedy necessitates the utmost exactitude on the part of the poet. In the diction, as in no other part of tragedy, he is in all things ruled by the greatest precision, for faulty diction could produce the complete downfall of the play because the lines spoken by the actors must at least be credible to the audience. What further heights the poet may reach with the diction in tragedy can only enhance it, but it is strictly necessary that we are able to hear and understand the

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[57]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1456a 1.

words since it is through them that character and action is indicated. The shorter section following, on melody, strives to show this relationship and the necessity of using both melody and diction to this end in the tragedy.

Chapter twenty-one of the Poetics describes the diction in tragedy in terms of literary device, while the first part of chapter twenty describes diction according to its linguistic content.

Aristotle seems to have in mind a phonetic analysis of the Letter and the Syllable as indicated by the following remarks:

"The Letter is an indivisible sound [my italics] of a particular kind, one that may become a factor in an intelligible sound."[58] By 'intelligible sound' is indicated the morpheme or word.

"A Syllable is a non-significant composite sound [my italics] made up of a mute and a Letter having a sound (a vowel or semi-vowel)."[59] In both its linguistic and literary composition diction is "...

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[58]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1456b26.

[59]Aristotle, Poetics, 1456b35.

the composition of the verses."[60] The actors speaking the lines of the poet in the tragedy are bound to speak them correctly, i.e., the words must be correctly pronounced and the actors must understand the words linguistically. They must also comprehend the meaning of the poet's literary devices as they apply to the presentation of the plot.

> "The study of the sound structure of language is divided into two branches: phonemics has to do with the function of speech sounds. Phonetics has to do with the production of speech sounds."[61]

Aristotle divides the sounds of the Letters into vowel sounds, semi-vowel sounds and mutes. He says that "... A vowel is a Letter having a audible sound without the addition of another letter."[62]

> Yet "... What in any language is regarded as the 'same sound' is actually a group of similar sounds which make up what is known as a phoneme. A phoneme is thus the smallest distinctive unit of speech; it consists of a number of allophones, that is, of similar sounds which are not distinctive. Thus speakers of English regard as the 'same sound' the sound spelled t in tone and

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[60] Aristotle, Poetics, 1449b34.

[61] C. D. Buchanan, A Programed Introduction to Linguistics, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1963), p. 17.

[62] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1456b26.

> stone, though actually a different sound is symbolized by the letter t in each of these words; in tone the initial consonant is aspired... in stone this aspiration is lacking."[6]

These elements of diction, linguistic, morphological and literary are servants of the plot, for they construct and convey it and are part of the means of imitation in tragedy. However the manner in which Aristotle presents the linguistic function of diction, particularly as regards phonetics, seems inapplicable to the English language and may even be so regarding the original Greek, owing to the vast studies compiled in this area. This seeming inapplicability may also be due to an assumption on the part of Aristotle which we will explain below.

According to the specifications of the phoneme, i.e. that it is audible, Aristotle's Letter as well as all the vowels and consonants of the entire alphabet are eligible for inclusion under the classification of phoneme. Thus his definition of the vowel can be equally well applied to the consonant. How then are we to distinquish them? In English, all

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[6]T. Pyles, The Origins and Development of the English Language, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 30. Hereafter all references to T. Pyles will be made to this volume.

vowels, consonants, semi-vowels, etc., are audible as allophones of the same phonemes. The allophone is always audible, this being its chief characteristic, and is a phonetic representation of the respective phoneme of each.

Phonemics discerns the linguistic symbol and the basic sound of each. The phoneme may be altered in its phonetic representation depending upon the presence of another symbol or symbols (these also being allophones) which, according to rules of pronunciation can render its pronunciation different from that of its accepted basic sound.[64] The basic sound of the letter (allophone) may acquire several allophones as it is influenced by those allophones with which it forms a morphological unit [word]. This is accomplished by changes in "... their place of articulation, their manner of articulation;"[65] and the occurrence of these variations has a phonemic as well as a phonetic result.

Aristotle remarks that "... the Letters differ in various ways: as produced by different conformations

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[64] See above, note 63, p. 54.

[65] T. Pyles, The Origins and Development of the English Language, (1971) p. 31.

or in different regions of the mouth."[66] This is to distinguish between the letter and the sound it makes when spoken, which is precisely the distinction between phoneme and phonetic component.

In the section of the Poetics cited, Aristotle seems to use the phoneme and its phonetic expression interchangeably and while he is undoubtedly aware of the difference between the two, the vascillation from one linguistic area to another within such a short chapter, coupled with the structurally different languages [i.e., English and Greek], with their different linguistic rules, makes the chapter difficult to follow. For example, the mute vowel of which Aristotle speaks[67] would be an allophone of a phoneme, since all the vowels are capable of being audibly pronounced. Therefore, a mute vowel is a contradiction in terms.

Phonetics applies to the physical production of speech sounds, while phonemics deals with the way in which sounds are symbolically recorded and reproduced.

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[66]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1456b30.

[67]Aristotle, Poetics, 1456b28.

The remainder of chapter twenty defines the conjunction, the article, the noun, the verb and the speech, illustrating the progression from non-significant to significant sounds, from more simple to more complex construction. The chapter, once considered in view of the poet or actor, emphasizes the necessity of rational creativity in both speech (i.e., common language) and literary alterations of speech (i.e., poetry), because language itself was created by man and poetry, developing from operant principles within the spoken, common language, produced a linguistic expression removed from it, at least insofar as its expressions are of a different kind. Both poet and actor must be master of common language and creator of the literary one in order for diction to contribute to the unity of the tragedy.

> "A Speech is said to be in two ways, either as signifying one thing, or as a union of several speeches made into one by conjunction. Thus the Iliad is one speech by conjunction of several; and the definition of man is one through its signifying one thing."[68]

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[68]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1457a27.

In any case, speech is an activity which, even in the most poorly contrived and executed fashion, is an activity requiring the use of reason and this, whether the speech be common or literary.

The distinguished director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Britain's National Theatre Peter Brook, emphasizes the necessity for the actor to understand the way in which diction functions in the play. Brook finds such a combination of ordinary and unfamiliar levels of language in Shakespeare's King Lear:

> "Ingrateful man' and 'Dinner, ho!' are both lines by Shakespeare in a verse tragedy, but in fact they belong to quite different worlds of acting."[69]

They also belong to different worlds of diction.

Brook continues:

> "Lears often declaim this phrase, bringing the play into artificialities, yet when Lear says the words, he is not acting in a poetic tragedy, he is simply a man calling for his dinner."[70]

Chapter twenty-one deals at length with the noun as an ordinary word and as a devised one, most notably

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[69] P. Brook, The Empty Space, (New York: Murray Printing Co., 1968), p. 123. Hereafter all references to Brook will be made to this volume.

[70] P. Brook, The Empty Space, p. 123.

in the form of the metaphor. Both the philosopher and the poet in ancient Greece engaged themselves in trying to familiarize themselves with the world around them. In order to achieve this familiarity they likened the world to themselves because they did not wish to be alien nor surrounded with that which was alien to them. The poetic device of personification, which itself is a kind of metaphor, was abundantly in use. Homer used it in creating the anthropomorphic gods and goddesses who peopled the remote areas, the high places and who influenced the lives of the Greeks themselves. Empedocles, while by no means the only philosopher to do so, uses poetic device as a basis upon which to construct his philosophy as it attempts to explain change. He ascribes a personality to the universe so that the actions of change can be seen as originating in the emotions of this personified cosmos.

"As Empedocles observes the microcosm, so he interprets the macrocosm: Love causes the mixture of the elements, Strife causes their separation."[71] Love and Strife are themselves metaphorical renderings of what would less poetically be called forces. In

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[71] M. C. Nahm, Selections from Early Greek Philosophy, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 11.

the philosophies of Aristotle, Hegel and in that of Plotinus, the world is equipped with a soul. The discovery by the Pythagoreans of the proportions between musical notes expressible in mathematical terms is expressed as the 'music of the spheres,' an expression which gives to the planets the facility to compose and play music, a facility which is strictly correct only in describing human action. The poet and the philosopher ascribe human characters to the environment. In a world of things which man finds external to himself and unknown both poet and philosopher try to know by likening the world to man himself. They imaginatively observed the world by means of personification and metaphorical representation of the objects they sought to know.

Melody and Spectacle are considered by Aristotle to be the least important of the six parts of tragedy, although he does pay to Melody the compliment that it is "... the greatest of the pleasurable accessories of tragedy."[72]

In the section of the Poetics which deals with plot construction, Aristotle remarks:

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[72]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450b15.

> "The Chorus too should be an integral part of the whole and take a share in the action... With the later poets, however, the songs in a play of theirs have no more to do with the Plot of that [of Sophocles' writing] than of any other tragedy. Hence it is that they are now singing intercalary pieces, a practice first introduced by Agathon. And yet what real difference is there between singing such intercalary pieces, and attempting to fit in a speech, or even a whole act, from one play into another?"[73]

Owing to the introduction of what he obviously considered irrelevant material into the body of the play, Aristotle's evident exasperation springs from his conviction that "... in poetry the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole."[74]

As our remarks about spectacle, so our remarks about melody will demonstrate and uphold the necessary relations of the elements of the play which comprise the plot and thus contribute to the creation of that unity which is necessary to it.

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[73]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1456a25.

[74]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a30.

Through spectacle unity is given the plot since it provides the physical location within which and through which the play is able to be presented.

By means of melody, the unity of the plot is also served. However, as Aristotle points out, the melodies used in tragedy must be integral to the action. It is through the necessary relationship of melody to the action of the tragedy that the unity of plot depends, because melody is employed by the poet in such a manner as to make it altogether indispensable to the playing of any scene in which melody is included. Therefore, the pleasure afforded us by the use of melody in the presentation of the plot is not so much dependent upon the fact that melody is used, but that its use is entirely appropriate to the scene and is related to the expression of character as well.

One of the most pitiably tragic scenes in the works of William Shakespeare is that in which Ophelia appears before Gertrude and Claudius. It is the last time the audience sees her prior to their receiving the news of her death.[75] The entire scene makes use

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[75]Shakespeare, Shakespeare: The Complete Works, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), Hamlet, Act IV, Sc. V. Hereafter all references to Shakespeare will be made to the Harcourt edition.

of melody in the manner which Aristotle would have approved: it would be impossible to play the scene without its two ballads and snatches of song. The inclusion of the melody serves to illustrate Ophelia's madness and its causes and also provides the foreshadowing by which we can accept the bizzare circumstances of her death, since she appears in this scene strewn with flowers and it is in searching out flowers by a stream that she falls into the stream and is drowned.

Turning again to Shakespeare's works, this time to Othello, we find the "song of willow" which Desdemona sings, interrupted by three spoken lines of text, and introduced by scripted lines of dialogue between Desdemona and her lady, Emilia. These lines explain the mood in which Desdemona finds herself and the reasons why she feels disposed to sing the song. It is unquestionable that the song is intended as a vehicle by which the plot is advanced and it also, because of its theme and mood (of the song), sets the following scene in which Desdemona is killed. The change from one scene to the next is produced through the use of the song and is as well an agent by which Desdemona's character is further established. It certainly is a scene in which one recognizes the appearance of foreboding.

There is no doubt that the removal of those tragic scenes using melody would, at least in the two cases cited, result in a gross unbalancing of the entire play. The former unities of the plays would be marred, and the tragic effect, at least in the case of Othello might be much less rich and poignant and consequently the plays would be weakened.

The employment of melody in tragedy, therefore, is necessarily bound to carry out the incidents of the plot and so, like spectacle must, no matter how much or how little of it is in use in the plot, arise from those incidents as probable and necessary in the further development of the plot.

Through the specific uses of diction and melody we see once again the probability and necessity with which the poet must comply in order that the end of the play be served.

Chapter Four

Unity of Plot: The Consequences of its specific selection to the form.

By the preceeding treatment of spectacle, diction, and melody, we sought to show their distinctive function as they are found in the tragic form.

The following chapter treats of the most important element of the most important part of tragedy, the unity of the plot. By examining various elements with which unity may be achieved we sought to formulate statements of a more general nature regarding the universal of which the plot in tragedy is exemplary.

As regards the principle of unity inherent in the plot, we find it ordered in the six parts of tragedy. Furthermore, it is possible to construct additional forms of art by a comparative study of the parts of tragedy in which the parts are ordered successively and the characteristics of their unifying effects discovered.

Thus, if spectacle be ordered as the first part of the dramatic parts ordered in the tragic form, the unifying element will be one of spectacle, and the form which corresponds to that in which spectacle is so ordered is that of the circus.

In the same way, melody can be seen to impart the operatic form when melody is the primary mode of expression of the other parts of the previously tragic constituents.

The portrayal of characterization as most consequential in the unity of dramatic form produces the forms of the dance and the mime. The commedia dell' arte style of acting, with its stock characters and exclusively improvised plots also exemplifies a form emerging from the employment of characterization as the unifying element of dramatic parts.[76]

The thought is, of course, necessary to the creation of all works of art in any form and can occasion stylistic changes as well as those of form, in which entire worlds may be fabricated and exemplified in various literary forms, the novel, the epic and literature generally being examples of such forms.

From the writings of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, author of Don Quijote, Erich Auerbach provides an example of the effect of thought as it functions in that novel:

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[76] A. Nicoll, The Theory of Drama, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., Publishers), pp. 67-68.

> "But above all, what was it that so attracted Cervantes in the idea?
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> "What attracted him was the possibilities it offered for multifariousness and effects of perspective, the mixture of the fanciful and everyday elements in the subject, its malleability, elasticity, adaptibility. It was ready to absorb all forms of style and art. It permitted the presentation of the most variegated picture of the world in a light congenial to his own nature...
>
> "It is not a philosophy; it is no didactic purpose; it is not even a being stirred by the uncertainty of human existence or by the power of destiny... It is an attitude - an attitude toward the world, and hence, also toward the subject matter of his art - in which bravery and equanimity play a major part."[77]

Auerbach's comments upon the function of thought in the works of Shakespeare demonstrate one similarity of style shared by these writers which results from the employment of the concept:

> "Shakespeare's dramatic economy is prodigally lavish; it bears witness to his delight in rendering the most varied phenomena of life, and this delight in turn is inspired by the concept that the cosmos is everywhere interdependent, so that every chord of human destiny arouses a multitude of voices to parallel or contrary motion."[78]

This employment throughout of the concept in the works of Shakespeare can be seen also in the work of

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[77] E. Auerback, Mimesis, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 312.

[78] E. Auerbach, p. 284.

such playwrights as Harold Pinter and Tennessee Williams in such plays as The Birthday Party by Pinter and Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire, where the helplessness of the central character and the bitter confusion which surrounds Stella, Stanley and Blanche respectively, are wrought by the playwrights through the agency of what might be considered a great deal of stylization; yet both plots imitate life, though their styles are not of the same styles as those found in Shakespeare nor those of the Greek dramatists. Nevertheless, since Pinter and Williams both imitate life by confining it within a particular cosmos to the production of style, the concepts from which they derive their dramatic expression are used by them in the same pervasive manner used by Shakespeare and the dramatists of antiquity.

The selection of diction as the unifying principle in the creation of form removes us from the dramatic form to that of literature in general, although the comedies of the Restoration period exemplify a brilliance of diction which, in conjunction with their excellences of characterization, distinguish them as dramatic forms even though they are capable of being appreciated solely on the basis of their literary accomplishments.

Let us now distinguish the principle of unity as it is in the tragic form.

> "The unity of plot does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject. An infinity of things befall that one man, some of which it is impossible to reduce to unity, and in like manner there are many actions of one man which cannot be made to form one action..."[79]

The audience member who, upon seeing a performance of Shakespeare's Henry VIII, judges the play good or ill according to the extent to which it faithfully adheres to the life of the historical personage, Henry VIII, king of England, born in the year of our Lord fourteen hundred ninety-one, is one who fails or refuses to perceive the action of the plot as the poet has constructed it. Such a viewer bases his criticisms upon an adherence to scientific method which deals with particulars. Shakespeare's Henry is certainly a particular, but only within the play, whose treatment is of universals through particulars. Therefore, the viewer uses a method which is inapplicable to the subject, i.e. the play. He substitutes an objective world for a subjective interpretation of a fanciful one which relies for its

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[79]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a15.

possible creation upon the objectively real. Therein lies his error.

> "... The truth is that, just as in the other imitative arts one imitation is always of one thing, so in poetry, the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one part of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole."[80]

The viewer who judges the play according to scientific principles is usually involved in precisely such a transposition or withdrawal because he has not the means to accept as real the circumstances or action of the play. In substituting the acts of the historical Henry for the acts of the Shakespearean character, our viewer destroys the possibility of grasping the whole of the play because he himself, in intruding the historical person, "... dislocates the whole"[81] of the action of the play which admits only the actions of its characters.

> "The work of art, man's 'creature' is ... even more than by its substantial distinction from the object, conventional, to be interpreted and understood not as a direct reflection of the world as the world

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[80]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a30.

[81]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a33.

> is in itself, but as a symbol or group of symbols having an ascertained rational significance and an even deeper content, not functioning only as a means to recognition but as a means to communication and to vision... 'Our understanding of them (myths and scriptures)[82] is as totally unlike the thing as it is in itself and as it is in God as though it did not exist' (257) but there is more in the work of art than can be understood, 'none so wise but when he tries to fathom them will find they are beyond his depth and discover more therein.' Art is simultaneously denotation, connotation and suggestion..."[83]

To say that scientific procedures do not uncover the meaning of art is not to say that art does not use and indeed require science. However, it is in the employment of technique that science finds its way into art. The discovery of substances with which the painter can mix colours to bring about new textures, the mastery of vocal technique with which the actor can manufacture characters with voices of their own, the construction of instruments with which the musician can produce greater and better sounds in his music are circumstances the production of which require the assistance of science.

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[82] My parenthesis.

[83] A. K. Coomaraswamy, The Transformation of Nature in Art, (New York: Dover Publications, 1934), pp. 83-84.

In the area of theatrical production, none is so abreast of the technological advances of the present as stage lighting and sound techniques and the complexities of cinematography are so far advanced as to benefit by the direction of genius in their deployment.[84]

Art requires science for its most effective expression, artistic technique being its science, but technique is perpetually a means to an artistic end. The more excellent the quality of technique, the more excellent is rendered the artistic expression and excellence of expression is constantly sought.

> "From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary... Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars."[85]

Film critic Andrew Sarris, defending the artistic methods of director Jean-Luc Godard remarks:

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[84] P. Cowie, "The Study of a Colossus: Citizen Kane," The Emergence of Film Art, L. Jacobs, ed., (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1969), pp. 262-274.

[85] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a-b5.

> "Most left-wing directors...prefer to deal in universals rather than specifics. Their concern is man in general, not men in general."[86]

We refer to Mr. Sarris' comments in view of the demonstrated artistry of M. Godard and it would therefore appear that he demonstrates his artistry in a manner contrary to that described in the above passage, footnoted number eighty-five.

Whether or not the left-wing directors, objects of Mr. Sarris' scorn, can be shown to have presented a more general, hence more universal, picture of humanity, it remains that, general or specific, the action of the film is usually conveyed through the agency of the character, just as it is in tragedy.

The resultant film may well draw disfavour insofar as it is not sufficiently specific. However, an insufficient degree of specificity is not the cause of universality.

When Aristotle says that the successful poet will be found to have rendered statements of a universal nature, he in no fashion indicates that universal statements are lacking in specification.

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[86] A. Sarris, "A Movie Is a Movie Is a Movie Is a," The Emergence of Film Art, L. Jacobs, ed., (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1969), p. 313.

"... film makers who consider themselves more engage or committed than Godard,"[87] must, if they are engaged in the expression of generalities, be less universal in their statements than he. If Mr. Sarris is right, M. Godard ensures a greater degree of universality in his work than do his fellows, precisely because of the specification he presents and uses in his films.

Sarris' use of the word, universal, is of course removed from the sense in which Aristotle uses it. Sarris plainly intends universality to imply a lack of precision and clarity or a vague generality which loses, by the magnitude of its compass, the particulars of which it is comprised.

Aristotle, conversely, refers to univerality as the agency by which intelligibility is imparted to the work of art.

M. Godard, in expressing a degree of specificity which surpasses, at least in Mr. Sarris' opinion, the work of his peers, produces a work which is universal simply because he does not deal with universals, but

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[87] A. Sarris, "A Movie Is a Movie Is a Movie Is a," The Emergency of Film Art, L. Jacobs, ed., (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1969), p. 313.

with particulars which in the context of his work take on a universal significance.

Returning to the theatre: it is the nature of the theatre that whatever it employs as its object of imitation be of universal significance. The degree to which that object expresses such a significance will be attested to by the work of art. The stage requires universality of expression by the very fact that it exists for the entertainment of groups, of audiences, and the action portrayed upon the stage must be exaggerated, intensified or concentrated in some fashion in order that it be perceivable to that viewing audience.

Because just as art holds the mirror up to nature, the theatre shows man to himself - each character on the stage represents every man. This assumption is basic to every play, and it is upon the basis of this assumption that the play aspires to universality and is rendered intelligible.

G. B. Harrison makes the following remarks concerning the universality of the poet, Shakespeare:

> "... notable is his use of the imagery of the sea, which recurs constantly throughout his plays. There are certain remarkable set pieces, such as Clarence's dream in Richard III or in the shipwreck in The Tempest. These are not

> necessarily very significant. Any writer who wishes to create such effects can find his material. Far more important as reflections of Shakespeare's mind are the causal images of the sea used sometimes to illustrate something quite different:
>
> 'Will all Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red...'
>
> "Surely Shakespeare's vision of the sea was something greater than can be picked up from an afternoon's cruise on a summer vacation."[88]

Rendering the possible as probable and necessary to the plot, Shakespeare, in the selection above from Macbeth, contrives that Macbeth, because of the weight of his guilt, should express the unlikelihood of his being pardoned. All of Neptune's seas could readily wash from his hand, many times over, the blood of the murdered Duncan but Macbeth regards the guilt he feels as being absolutely unabsolvable.

The sea, the blood and murder are all particulars used by Shakespeare to create and express Macbeth's thoughts and character. The relationship of the cleansing property of water, the sea, the sensation of blood on his hands and the knowledge of guilt combine

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[88] G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), p. 5. Hereafter all reference to Harrison will be made to the Harcourt edition.

in the circumstances of the action of the play to produce an expression about the murder of the king, Duncan, which transcends the play because each of the aforementioned particulars are known, in varying degree, to all men. The possibility of the communication of Macbeth's situation, moral, psychological, emotional and spiritual, is therefore rendered universal.

Let it suffice that the treatment of plot consists in the consideration of unity, probability and possibility. The quantitative parts of the tragedy and the techniques by which the poet constructs the play are not pertinent to the demonstration of how the tragic form is, by nature, mimetic.

In conclusion, we offer the following remarks on the unity of the plot.

Why, if art is dependent upon reason for its conception, execution and appreciation, is the principle thought not ranked by Aristotle as of most importance in the parts of tragedy?

The order of the parts of tragedy is given by Aristotle according to their necessary function within the tragic form. For this reason, thought, though even the plot itself depends for its creation upon it, is ranked third, rather than first in order of importance.

Certainly the poet's thought of the plot was prior to its existence as a poetic form and that relation holds regarding all of the parts of tragedy, but only when we wish to indicate their sources.

In the play, the activity, thought, is represented as it is found in real life, issuing from the minds of men through the expression of them in language, (in the play, this occurs in the diction).

The parts are not ordered so as to show the sequence in which the poet thought of them, but are so ordered to demonstrate the limits within which and the way in which the action of the play is represented.

Chapter Five

Thought as Expressed Through Character

The following chapter demonstrates the interrelation of thought to character in particular and following that, to tragedy as a whole. It will illustrate the manner in which thought is related to character and how character reveals it thereby casting more light upon the statement generally made in the chapter on mimesis that thought necessarily preceeds the creation of the work of art. We have not treated of the various techniques which may be used by the actor to achieve the physicalization of the character he portrays, although we have alluded to their workings, as such a treatment would serve only to embellish what can be more clearly stated through an examination of the structure and function of the parts of the plot.

The concluding section of the chapter will elaborate by a continuing reference to Aristotle and M. Untersteiner's book, The Sophists, the particular operation of reason confronted by the element of irrationality from which the work of art comes into being.

In his discourse on character in tragedy, Aristotle remarks that the first of "... four points

to aim at ..."[89] is that the characters be good. That the characters be appropriate, like reality and consistent in their depiction are actually ways in which the characterization, if good, is accomplished, although Aristotle enumerates them as the remaining three ends towards which the poet and the actor must strive in the presentation of tragedy.

"Character in the play," says Aristotle, "is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents."[90]

Since not all characters in tragedy reveal good moral purposes, Aristotle's reference to the characters' being good is better construed as pertaining to the manner of depiction of the character.

Goodness in a character will be revealed only "... if the purpose so revealed is good."[91]

While many of the ancient Greek plays and certain of the plays of William Shakespeare clearly indicate villainous and evil characters in their tragedies, the peculiar natures of such characters often contain elements of goodness which contribute to the creation of tragic effect.

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[89]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450a16.

[90]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450b8.

[91]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1454a18.

> "There are in the natural order of things, therefore, two causes, Thought and Character, of their actions and consequently of their success or failure in their lives."[92]

If the actions dependent on character determine both the success and the failure of the life of a character then clearly Aristotle refers, by goodness, not only to the standards of excellence fulfilled in the proper poetic and dramatic creation of character, but also to degrees of moral goodness exemplified by the characters as read or played.

In Sophocles' Electra, Clytaemnestra is not of good moral character; nor is Iago, the wicked officer in Shakespeare's Othello, however both characters have moments in the respective plays in which degrees of goodness are displayed by each of them.

The better tragic plays depict characters who possess compelling as well as repulsive moral traits; the reverse is true of the characters who are depicted as predominantly evil. The possession of a bit of evil in the best and a touch of goodness in the most wicked characters is to be striven for in the creation of tragic characters.

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[92]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450a2.

> "As tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we in our way should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is."[93]

Thus Clytaemnestra, assisting in the murder of her husband, estranges her daughter, lives in fear of vengeance and yet sorrowfully remembers her son Orestes whom she believes to have been accidentally killed (even though it is this same Orestes who is to be his father's avenger).

> "Even Clytaemnestra is a mother:.. 'It is strange to be a mother. We cannot hate our children though they hurt us.' Then she draws breath again, and revels in the thought that she is safe at last."[94]

Iago's villainy is motivated by his reaction to Othello's having slighted him.

> "Roderigo: Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.
>
> Iago: Despise me if I do not. There are great ones of the city, in personal suit to make me his Lieutenant, off-capped to him. And, by the faith of man, I know my price, I am worth no worse a place. But he ... nonsuits my mediators, for, 'Certes,' says he, 'I have already chose my officer."[95]

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[93] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1454b8-12.

[94] J. T. Sheppard, Aeschylus & Sophocles, Their Work and Influence, (New York: Longmans & Co., 1927), p. 64.

[95] Shakespeare, Othello, Act I, Scene I, p. 1058.

However much Othello did not intend injury by his actions, we are still able to sympathize a little with Iago's feelings.

> "Iago is one of Shakespeare's most subtle villains. He is an Italian and therefore in Elizabethan eyes, malignant by nature. There were many such in other plays, and indeed stories of real life in sixteenth-century Italy produce characters as ruthless and devilish. Iago loves mischief for its own sake and finds cruelty amusing.... He naturally expects Othello will select him as second in command, and his own vanity is in part justified, for he is in many ways a better man than Cassio. When he is rejected he suffers the bitter blow which will come to everyone... when he sees himself passed over in favour of someone whom he despises."[96]

At the play's conclusion, the memory of our sympathy for the Iago of Act One, Scene One heightens our sense of waste in the light of his subsequent evil acts.

Aristotle's recommendation that the characters be "...like reality,"[97] is closely allied with this function of morality, especially in the works of Shakespeare. The mixture of good and evil in all of the characters is revealed as to its degree before the plot completely unfolds through a device peculiar to Shakespeare known as 'retributive justice.'

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[96] G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 1058.

[97] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1454a24.

Iago is cursed by the dying Othello: "I'd have thee live, for, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die."[98] And we are satisfied that the villain will be tortured and sentenced to some punishment. Yet Othello spoils his own happiness through jealousy and even the loving Desdemona suffers death. In her case, we have a fine example of the mingling of evil with good which is also indeed 'like reality.'

> "Desdemona, as a lady of great family, was expected to make a suitable marriage with one of her own rank. The notion that anyone was free to marry at fancy was not generally held. It was utterly inconceivable that a girl of Desdemona's rank should run off in the night with a stranger, however distinguished. Brabantio is so dumbfounded that he brings wild charges of witchcraft against Othello, for witchcraft is the only rational explanation of such an incredible breach of normal behaviour.
>
> Brabantio was, therefore, a much-wronged man, and Desdemona was punished albeit too brutally, for committing a sin against what at that time was regarded as fundamental decency."[99]

Aristotle's urging that the characters be 'like reality' applies to and can be best understood in its relation to the fact that tragedy imitates life through characters who are better than ordinary men.

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[98] Shakespeare, Othello, Act I, Scene I, p. 1099.

[99] G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 1058.

It is the reality of their life styles and their stations in life which must be incorporated into their depiction, as well as all of the most excellent poetic and dramatic technique, in order that the characters appear as real and possible people. Space does not permit an exposition of the function of poetic and dramatic technique in a systematic manner, however Shakespeare lays down a few fundamental rules for actors in Hamlet, Act III Scene II which provide the basis for naturalistic acting and Aristotle treats of the poetic technique in this regard in the Poetics when speaking of the manner of construction of the plot. These two passages provide a suitable reference from which to begin such a study.

Aristotle's recommendation that the characters be constructed consistently can be explained, as can each of the four points, after the manner of poetic and dramatic technique.

> The poet, "At the time when he is constructing his plots, and engaged on the Diction in which they are worked out... should remember (1) to put the actual scenes as far as possible before his eyes. In this way, seeing everying with the vividness of an eye-witness as it were, he will devise what is appropriate, and be least likely to overlook incongruities... As far as may be, too, the poet should even act his story with the

very gestures of his personages."[100]

Guarding against incongruity of the action of the characters produces consistency and, as we have seen from the above passage, consistency is achieved by strict adherence to reality in the creation of the plot.

Explaining the consistency of the action in terms of speech, Constantin Stanislavski says:

> "Just as we underline this or that syllable of a word, this or that word in a phrase, we have to throw into relief the most important phrase carrying a whole thought and do the same in a long story, a dialogue or a soliloquy. We follow the same principle of choosing the significant component parts in one large scene, a whole act and so on, the important episodes out of it all we evolve a chain of outstanding points which vary among themselves as to their volume and fullness."[101]

The endeavours described by Stanislavski are only possible within the framework of the poet's creation and are, of course examples of an entire body of acting technique which Stanislavski calls psycho-technique, comprised of the actor's perspective of the role, which is his understanding of the action of the play.

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[100] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1455a22-30.

[101] C. Stanislavski, Building a Character (New York: Theater Arts Books, 1949), p. 170.

> "Only after an actor has thought through, analyzed and felt himself to be a living person inside his whole part there opens up to him the ... perspective.
>
> "Take as an illustration of this the fact that some actors who play the part of Luka in Gorki's The Lower Depths do not even read the last act because they do not appear in it. As a result they cannot possibly have a true perspective and are unable to play their role correctly. The end hinges on the beginning. The last act is the outcome of the old man's preaching. Therefore one must have one's eyes always trained on the climax and lead all the characters whom Luka affects toward the end."[102]

Again, consistency is entirely dependent upon the probability and possibility of the action represented in the play.[103] Consistency as presented by the poet and portrayed by the actor is a necessary inclusion in the construction of the plot.

Appropriateness of characterization for the actor consists in his following the dictates of the poet, i.e., interpreting the plot correctly. For the poet, appropriateness of characterization will be achieved if he confines himself within the area of what is probable or possible and necessary to the plot he constructs.[104]

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[102] C. Stanislavski, Building a Character, (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1949), p. 171.

[103] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451b27-32.

[104] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1455a35-1455b2.

The goodness, appropriateness, realism and consistency of character are thus all dependent upon the probability, possibility and necessity of the plot.

Aristotle obviously prefers the logical plot[105] since tragedy is ultimately demonstrative and "... it is the action in it, i.e. its Fable or Plot, that is the end and purpose of tragedy."[106] Tragedy has a conclusion which is drawn from premisses and is like rhetoric in that way because persuasion is effected by the enthymeme which is a persuasive device fashioned after the syllogism.[107] Although the play is not a speculative enterprise, probability, necessity and possibility, all characteristic of theoretical reasoning, are necessary to its creation.

The preceeding pages will have shown the need of a thoroughgoing relationship between thought and of other parts of tragedy, character in particular. Diction communicates the thoughts of the character and the actions and reactions of the personage reflect his

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[105]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a30-1451b.

[106]Aristotle, The Poetics, 1450a22.

[107]See pp. 98-99.

character. In short, there is not a character which does not, in some manner, think and, upon the basis of his thoughts, act in accordance with them. And, as we have previously remarked, the poet, whose creations the characters are, has previously conceived all such thoughts and actions prior to the characters' presentation of them.

The demands that the characters be like reality, appropriate and consistent can be subsumed under the demand that they be good, a criterion which will generally bear out the purpose of the action. The demands relate as much to physical characterization as they do to the more subtle shadings of interpretation required in the interpretation of the diction of the character. All elements of character, as indeed all the elements of the play, depend on thought since in the play the chance event occurs by design.

We now turn to consider the element of thought itself as it is present in the work of art in order to establish more certainly, in light of philosophical and artistic standards, the peculiarities of its function. We shall deal herein with the function of the beholder of the work of art in order to clearly illustrate the view that without the assistance of reason and the imagination, not even the artist himself

would be able to understand, criticize, evaluate or even recognize what is indicated by the existence of the art object.

The philosophical thought of the rhetorician Gorgias is described as contrary to "... rationalism, knowledge purely according to reason [which] appears as strictly onesided in contrast to the predominantly aesthetic culture of Greece which was current until then."[108] In Hegelian fashion, Untersteiner points out that epistemology and ontology do not, as they do in Platonic philosophy, coalesce in the thought of Gorgias.

The work of art is a combination of disparate elements, resulting from the confrontation of being and nonbeing and is dependent for its being upon the faculty of the imagination which effects the synthesizing "deception."[109] "The mystery of art coincides with the insoluble mystery of things which, being rationally unknowable, can be imposed by 'persuasion.'"[110]

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[108] M. Untersteiner, The Sophists, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 185. Hereafter all references to Untersteiner will be made to the Blackwell edition.

[109] Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 187, section 2.

[110] Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 187.

In the philosophy of Gorgias it is essential to art that it be deceptive, from both an epistemological and an ontological standpoint? Nonbeing, the antithesis of being, finds in the work of art a synthesis. Ignorance is synthesized with knowledge in the hypothetical or imaginative faculty which is the place of origin of the work of art.[111] It is within the hypothetical that the work of art finds its basis, for, as we have said,[112] the work of art requires that it be thought previous to its execution. The speculative act, being mimetic, imitates its object which is imaginary, constructed by the artist on the basis of his experience and knowledge. Imagination being ontologically constructed in the act of its being thought, requires reason with which it fabricates its constructs. Hereafter, the speculative expression once more requires reason so that it may find its empirical expression. The aim of the artist, to produce the perfection of his conception, is also accomplished through the agency of deception:

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[111] The mimetic act, as speculation, is entirely akin to 'deception' in Gorgias' philosophy.

[112] See Chapter Two, pp. 22-23.

> "The 'deception' of art, which operates a dialectic on the non-existent, non-knowable, non-communicable alternative of an antithesis, is resolved in that universality which in art is not only humanity of feeling but also idealization, which constitutes, for example the 'deception' of the artist who in order to paint the figure of the beautiful woman chooses as models several girls from whom to create, from the elements of beauty in each, perfect beauty."[113]

The degree to which the artist achieves success in his efforts is, in the speculative and executive moments of action, determined ultimately by himself and his own capabilities:

> "The strengh of the spirit is only as great as its expressions; its depth is only as deep as it dares to spread and lose itself in its explication."[114]

Similarly, the audience at the theatre or generally, those appreciative of a work of art, must also 'dare' to acquire as fully as possible, the expression of that work. For this reason we have said that the artist is quite capable of judging the success of the empirical expression of that work, by comparing it with the original idea which prompted it.[115]

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[113] M. Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 187.

[114] G. F. W. Hegel, Hegel: Texts and Commentary, W. Kaufmann, ed., (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 18.

[115] See Chapter Two, pp. 26-27.

In Gorgias' philosophy being and knowledge are tragic, therefore life is also tragic,[116] because by "... not denying the antithesis (nonbeing) it (art) recognizes the irrationality of things - which is the true essence of reality, as the treatise On Not Being shows...

> "Thus art, by bringing about knowledge of the radical nature of the antithesis which stands in opposition to every other antithesis, moves man to feel the sorrow of another as if it were his own, and therefore to suffer the universal existence of partial truth, of contradiction, of the irrational. Logos, by means of 'deception' polarizes my mind and my will, diverting them from objective knowledge, which is impossible, towards that partial combination of the elements of one extreme of the opposites, which is destined to become concrete in the seductive guise of art. Thus a victory over the uncertain 'opinion' is obtained as a consequence of the intervention of Logos, which ... unifies the elements of one term of the antithesis..."[117]

Thus tragedy is definitively, as Aristotle believes, "... all that it need be in its formative elements."[118] Were it not so, it would not be possible

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[116] M. Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 187, par. 4.

[117] M. Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 186, par. 4, - p. 187.

[118] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1449a7-10.

to discern tragedy as an art form. G. F. Else believes that Aristotle meant to imply an affirmative answer to the question of whether or not tragedy had in fact reached the perfection of its form. He submits that Aristotle was not truly inquiring in 1449a7-10 whether tragedy had achieved the fullness of its form, but that the statement is rhetorical and assumes the reader's agreement:

> "The question is foolish in itself, since Aristotle makes it perfectly clear elsewhere that he regards tragedy as having reached the heights with Sophocles and Euripides; and the present context rules it out of court altogether. Ἄλλος λόγος, in the Aristotelian treatises, regularly implies a promise to discuss the matter in question at some later time, and Aristotle nowhere again discusses or even broaches the question whether tragedy had reached its perfection in its own day.[119]

Let us now consider the remarks made by Aristotle on the place and function of Thought as it appears in tragedy. Aristotle himself refers to his Rhetoric for our inquiries into the place of thought in tragedy. Expressed Thought (Diction) in the theatre observes "... in any given case the available means of persuasion..."[120] insofar as it is rhetorical. Insofar

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[119] G. F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 150.

[120] Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355b26.

as it is dramatic it employs speculative and executive mimesis to conceive of and express it within the necessary or probable possibilities represented by the plot.[121] Therefore rhetorical speech in the play is poetically embodied and must be expressed in such a manner as to reveal it as such. This consideration occasions the development of the specific study of diction for both poet and actor, but it also involves both artists in the study of psychology and language.

> "Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof provided by the words of the speech itself."[122]

The spoken word in tragedy is the diction dependent upon thought wherein the poet supplies the actor, through the diction, with the thoughts of the character himself, which is in part provided by the actor's analysis of the play. Putting the audience into a certain frame of mind is accomplished by the events of the plot created by the poet which provides the

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[121] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1451a37.

[122] Aristotle, The Poetics, 1336a1-4.

contextual setting of the play. The proof or apparent proof given in the speech itself of the credibility of the speaker is also provided by the poet through the characters and insofar as the plot adheres to the principles of probability and necessity in its action.

> "The man, [the poet and the actor] who is to be in command of them [the three means of persuasion] must, it is clear be able (1) to reason logically (2) to understand human nature and goodness in their various forms, and (3) to understand the emotions..."[123]

Clearly the preceeding statement implies the extent to which art is a rational activity. Aristotle himself says that poetry "... demands a man with a special gift for it, or else with a touch of madness in him..."[124] but the use of the word 'gift' to describe the talent of the artist could as easily be rendered as 'capacity,' or 'understanding' which is connotative of the rational element. In any case, Aristotle concludes the statement: "... the former [the gifted man] can easily assume the required mood, and the latter [the madman] may be actually beside himself with emotion."[125] If the gifted man easily

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[123]Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1336a21.

[124]Aristotle, Poetics, 1455a32.

[125]Aristotle, Poetics, 1455a32-34.

assumes the character of his personages, how, if he is not mad, does he do so? The scope of the combined elements necessary for the creation of the ordered tragic form indicates only one justification of the suggested implication.

In tragedy, the element of thought is "... the power of saying whatever can be said, or whatever is appropriate to the occasion... Thought is shown in all they say when proving or disproving some particular or enumerating some universal proposition."[126] Similarly: "The Thought of the personages is shown in everything to be effected by their language - in every effort to prove or disprove, to arouse emotion (pity, fear, anger and the like), or to minimize or maximize things."[127]

These powers and actions in thought represent two of its aspects from which two elements of acting technique have arisen, the psycho-technique of Stanislavski[128] and the use of gesture and physical expression as distinct.

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[126]Aristotle, Poetics, 1450b4-11.

[127]Aristotle, Poetics, 1456a31-56b1.

[128]See pp. 86-87.

> "Extra gestures are the equivalent of trash...
>
> "An actor's performance which is cluttered up with a multiplicity of gestures will be like a messy sheet of paper. Therefore before he undertakes the external creation of his character, the physical interpretation, the transfer of the inner life of a part to its concrete image, he must rid himself of all superfluous gestures. Only under those conditions can he achieve the necessary sharpness of outline for its physical embodiment. Unrestrained movements, natural though they may be to the actor himself, only blur the design of his part, make his performance unclear, monotonous and uncontrolled."[129]

Shakespeare gives the direction succinctly: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action;"[130] and Aristotle's observation: "... their mental procedure must be on the same lines as their actions likewise, whenever they wish to arouse pity or horror or to have a look of importance or probability,"[131] is comparable.

Rhetorical expression finds its way into the tragic form because of the nature of the subject of the drama. Its events and characters are not

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[129]Stanislavski, Building a Character, (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1949), p. 69.

[130]Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Sc. II, p. 908.

[131]Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1357a15.

historically real and having no basis in fact, need not resort to logical but only apparent proofs in the explication of the actions of the plot. Rhetoric and tragedy both employ the example and the enthymeme, a syllogism which is comprised of fewer propositions than is the logical syllogism and which need not find a basis in historical fact but only a parallel or an example in order to be accepted as true.

> "Now the materials of enthymemes are Probabilities and Signs, which we can see must correspond respectively with the propositions that are generally and those that are necessarily true."[132]

Since the entire action of the play is accomplished by Peripety (a change from a state to its opposite) and Discovery (a change from ignorance to knowledge), one form of which is the sign, the incidents being probable or necessary are in all cases contingent in light of the action of a well-constructed plot. This same contingency in rhetorical expression is necessary in the enactment of the characters and the correspondence between probability and necessity might have been the pattern upon which the plot was first unified.

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[132]Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1357a33.

The theatre in all its forms shows us forms of change. By imitating the nobler, for example, tragedy shows us a man as he is and the manner in which he is. As he imitates his object we begin to understand the actors actions. He brings us even to the experience of death in a character through which we have also lived because of our understanding of that character's action, which is only possible through imagination and reason.

In attempting to imitate the nobler, we and the actor must know what is nobler; both poet and actor must know what in man is nobler in order that we transcribe that sort of character and create it from life in our imaginations.

The poet and actor as well as the audience must know what is nobler in order that the character find expression, that is, be communicated as being of noble character. History will attest to this, as will linguistics, for it is necessary for communication. The employment of the word 'tragedy' as conveying an impression of nobility of character indicates that both audience and artist discovered it in the written and performed work and agreed that it was so. Therefore the tragic form was recognized as noble, an element which was employed in the work's creation. Both artist

and audience knew the meaning of the word and had an idea of what it was. This implies that it was deliberately used as a vehicle for communication.

We deny Iago our sympathy because he is ignoble and unworthy of it, but the splendid, noble Othello commands all our pity. Such was the poet's intention. The poet draws from his knowledge of morality, linguistics and history and with his intellect, fashions the play from them. He represents life from his thoughts and in so doing, thought is represented as integral to human life, but it is represented in a play, in which he himself is not present and yet the play cannot have come into existence without his having conceived it; nor can he himself be said to have presented the play, for it is through the agency of characters who are themselves human beings that he expresses himself. The play imitates life, even has us accept that its events in performance are actually happening to the actors who portray the characters, yet its events are not real events. They are representations of them.

It is in the representation that the audience must participate, for without the audience there is no representation. The extent to which the audience can follow the action is the extent to which the action of the play is imitated by the actors and audience alike.

> "For of the three elements of speech-making--speaker, subject and person addressed--it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speaker's end and object."[133]

Therefore, the necessary sequence of communication of subject requires that the audience be able to distinguish the tragic form as such. If this had been impossible, the impression of nobility of character could never have been received by the audience. Furthermore, nobility in tragedy must be manifest in all aspects of the character as he thinks and acts, while the character's action is itself contrived by the poet. The poet intends a character which is to be like life in all respects but one: its action are wrought by characters whose intentions and acts are presented to us as if they belonged to the actors, but they actually do not. They belong to the poet and just as the artist assimilates his object, the audience must assimilate the play in order that it be completely successful as a work of art.

Karl Jaspers, in his book, Way to Wisdom, indicates five necessities of the human condition: we must die, suffer, struggle, be vulnerable to the effects of

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[133] Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1358a.

chance and we are involved in guilt.[134] All the tragic plays present men involved in these actions and the consequences of such confrontations.

> "In ultimate situations man either perceives nothing or senses true being..."[135]

Sheppard narrates the events of Sophocles' Electra the last scene of which represents such a perception by her, after the slaying of Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus:

> "She bids her brother make an end of words. 'When men's lives are bound to evil, what gain is there in time for a man who is to die? Kill him at once, and fling his body to the only buriers this man in decency should have--out of our sight. That, only that, can set me free from the old wrong.'
>
> "Can it? Can anything? While Orestes drives the wretched man to death,....the excellent effect of this example; while the Chorus sing that happiness and freedom have returned to the house of Atreus, Electra stands silent. What are her thoughts?.... In the world of Sophocles, men build their splendid edifice of....loyalty and love, with knowledge that at any moment the gods or circumstances or some simple human blunder may sweep the work away. Only the greatest ages the Periclean in Greece, the Elizabethan in England, can bear to face this issue. The greatest ages exult in it."[136]

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[134] K. Jaspers, The Way to Wisdom, (London: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 22. Hereafter all references to Jaspers will be made to this edition.

[135] Jaspers, The Way to Widsom, p. 23.

[136] J. T. Sheppard, Aeschylus and Sophocles: their work and influence, (New York: Longman's, Green and Co., 1927), p. 67-68.

If "The way in which man approaches his failure determines what he will become,"[137] then clearly the implication of Electra's silence must be comprehended by the audience.

If the ultimate source[138] of philosophy is the will to authentic communication, is not the ultimate source of drama also rooted in such a will? An art form such as tragedy which is presented before an audience and written by a poet who is "gifted"[139] in its conception and execution should incorporate as necessary to its form the participation of an audience in order to share the expression. Thus drama is much like philosophy in that it strives..." for communication, express[es] itself, demand[s] a hearing? And is not its very essence communicability, which is in turn inseparable from truth?"[140]

Surely we do not wish to imply that philosophy and art, specifically drama, are equal and similar in

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[137]Jaspers, The Way to Wisdom, p. 23.

[138]Jaspers, The Way to Wisdom, p. 26.

[139]Aristotle, Poetics, 1455a33.

[140]Jaspers, The Way to Wisdom, p. 27.

every aspect for "There is a philosophic no less than a poetic genius which is differentiated from the highest perfection of talent, not by degree but by kind."[141]

Both the art of philosophy and that of drama are, nevertheless, similar in their intents, and their procedures. The audience, the appreciative beholder of the work of art generally, is required in order that art may continue as does philosophy, to establish "...awareness of being, illumination through love, attainment of peace."[142]

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[141]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1943), p. 156.

[142]Jaspers, The Way to Wisdom, p. 27.

Conclusion

We have attempted to show that art, in particular its tragic form, requires the use of reason in order that it could be created in all its moments of development as a form. Its creation requires reason in both its conception and its execution, the artist drawing from his previous experience, knowledge and imagination to this end. The appreciation of the work of art also necessitates the operation of reason without which the work of art could not be of any greater importance to man than stones, chairs, papers, fences and other such objects whose relation to man is primarily utiliarian in nature. The work of art could not come to be nor could it be communicated as such to man without the operation of reason, since the act of imitation which is basic to all of the developmental moments of the work presupposes the use of reason of necessity and, as we have argued, mimesis is, itself, a rational activity.

In our criticism of Plato's Gorgias we have shown that the work of art is essentially communicative in nature. More obviously than other art forms, rhetoric is communicative because its end, persuasion, cannot

be effected without it. The end of the rhetorical speech i.e., persuasion, indicates two conclusions regarding it. In order that persuasion be effected the rhetorical speech must be understood by the audience. It must be intelligible to its hearers. Because in knowing some object must be mentally grasped from one mind by another mind or by one mind confronting some object in a particular manner, i.e. in such a way as to effect an understanding of the thing which was not previously understood, it is obvious that to say of such an assimilation of knowledge that it has been communicated is to state the basic assumption that what has been communicated was intelligible. Therefore, to say of the rhetorical speech that it is persuasive in character is to imply the manner of its communication and to assume its intelligibility for unintelligibles cannot be comprehended or understood and therefore, they cannot be communicated.

Rational endeavour is evident in all works of art from the simplest to the most complex despite what proportion of imaginative content is manifest in them. Neither philosophy nor art could continue to pursue their ends without the employment of both reason and imagination since both inquire into life in all its forms as it undergoes the process of change. More

often than philosophy, art reaches its conclusions through imaginative and experimental measures while philosophy inclines towards scientific procedures in the pursuit of its ends. Nevertheless, in such circumstances where their methods are inadequate to the solution of some new problem, neither art nor philosophy could proceed without formulating hypotheses which, although based upon previous knowledge could, in themselves, produce or provide nothing more than probabilities. However, in the sciences what is hypothetical is considered probable while in the arts it is considered imaginative yet both the arts and the sciences formulate hypotheses on the basis of reasoned conclusions; art could not exist without reason any more than could science.

Our purpose in examining the Poetics was to provide an example of a recognized art form, tragedy, by which to illustrate the extent to which reason was evident in its creation, execution and appreciation as an art and also to provide a contrasting approach to its analysis as an art form in contradistinction to that approach which Plato uses in his treatment of rhetoric in the dialogue Gorgias where the art of rhetoric is criticized according to its educational, moral and political effects rather than according to

its specific character as an art form.

Divested as it is of the external relationships it may have to other bodies of knowledge, the tragic form in the Poetics is presented as it is in itself. Its parts are distinguished and analyzed according to the contributions they make to its end so that we are much better able to discover in what relation tragedy stands to reality, what its possible status might be, considered as an object of knowledge.

It is the rational element in art which makes possible its creation and the participation of the beholder in appreciative activity. The work of art as a material object, the art object, could never provide an opportunity for its appreciation without the exercise of reason as practised by artist and beholder in imaginative efforts to know it.

For the philosopher, knowing is the only activity by which reality is disclosed, and its ends achieved. For the artist, imitative creativity (which presupposes communicability and hence, knowledge) is the activity by which reality is used, as it suggests objects, to the construction of imaginative hypotheses.

The philosopher is concerned with reality as it is; the artist is concerned with the discovery or invention of possibilities which would render reality

as it might be, based upon reality as it is.

Fictional reality, sensation, even irrational, chaotic elements present potential objects for imitation to the artist which insofar as they represent possibilities-to-be-developed, are ubiquitous, but the philosopher does not regard the objects of his knowledge as possibilities: they are actualities. Because of this, his knowledge is subject to degrees of excellence according to the extent to which it is conformed to its objects and according to the value of the objects themselves as being more or less desirable compared to knowledge of the most valuable objects of philosophical knowledge.

The object, when imitated in the creation of the work of art does not carry with it its previous philosophical or ontological status. It becomes the basis upon which an imaginative hypothesis will be constructed, where it will be transformed and invested with a different mode of being.

Even in its most strange, unfamiliar forms art is not unintelligible. The work of art, upon interpretation, is clearly rational. At least it is a thing which is provocative of rational comment and a bearer of rational content. The mimetic art, speculative, executive and appreciative is integrally

bound up with reasoning and, if associated with reason, is necessarily communicative for things reasoned are things known and what is know must be communicable. This is another way of saying that art and life are one.

The creations of artists are extensions of everyday life, things founded in reality which reach into quite different worlds and thereby give to us all an opportunity to see, through them, the characters and capacities of the life from which they were drawn. In this regard, art is rational, intelligent and inquiring, capable of confronting with philosophy its highest object but communicating that conformation in a vastly different way. Art creates its own truth while philosophy ever seeks it.

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